

## Book Reviews

much better off assuming a free flow of images and motives from the art to the science and from the science to art, the existence of parallel discourses. Oscar Wilde was right in concluding that we learn about nature from art, but it also true that we learn about art from nature. The assumption that one can begin with a “source”, the treatise on physiognomy, and thus take the image as secondary, as derivative, is too simple. Ned Lebow, in his study of the image of the Irish in nineteenth-century British thought (a study evidently unknown to Cowling), shows how slippery these images are. They are generated in any number of contexts and reappear with ease in others. Art forms (and is formed by) the theories of physiognomy, each needing an iconic shorthand to create “meaning” and a locus in which to effect this system. And this shorthand, with all of its ideological basis, is formed and used by the science of physiognomy. Anthropology does likewise. And all of these images form a semiotic system that is constantly in flux but that can and does reappear as permanent and unalterable in any given context.

My second “quibble” with Cowling’s reading of “the artist as anthropologist” is that she has neglected a substantial literature on physiognomy that might well have complemented and expanded her “reading” of Frith. The medical literature on pathology during the nineteenth century is fully part of this grand exchange of images. Let me make specific reference to her discussion of the “Jew swindler” in Frith’s *Derby Day*. Using contemporary sources (such as the *Athenaeum*’s discussion of this painting) she pinpoints the image of the Jew with his “heavy jowls” and “avaricious” expression as indicative of the swindler. Indeed, she reproduces a page from Eden Warwick’s classification of noses (1864) in which the Jewish nose, so evident in this portrait, is described as indicating a “facility of turning that insight into profitable account”. This would be sufficient, if we assumed a one-to-one relationship between theories of physiognomy and character, that is, a direct “influence” from one to the other. But a further literature, extensive and important in the nineteenth century, argues that the pathognomic signs of the Jewish body are indicators of disease and corruption, that what we are dealing with in the “Jew swindler” is not merely a sociopathic figure but a physiologically corrupt one. This view of the diseased Jew can have two readings: one, that the specific signs are symptoms of the “Jew swindler” (as with the Scot and Irishman) and set him off from the positive characters in this picture, or that these signs and symptoms mark him as “ill” and therefore as different from certain other Jews.

The 1850s, with its intense debates about Jewish integration into the political and social realities of Victorian England, with the rise of “Jewish” figures of social and cultural importance, needed to have some boundary drawn between the “good” British Jews and the “Jew swindlers”, not merely in terms of the social meaning ascribed to the figure of the Jew, but through the mode of distinguishing the “healthy” from the “sick” Jew, i.e., the Jew who could function within the body politic and the Jew who could not. Here the medical discourse on the Jew that uses the theories of physiognomy to make exact this distinction would help Cowling make a more subtle case. Indeed, it would have been of help in distinguishing between the “healthy” and “sick” Irishman as well. For it is not only “race” and “class” but also “health” that provides boundaries for the icons of difference that Frith offers the viewer. And these are embedded in the social demands for the visibility of difference that are reflected in Frith’s painting but also in the world of the Victorian physician.

This is a most exciting book in spite of my caveats. And my caveats apply not only to this study but to many of the “influence” studies of physiognomy. Cambridge University Press has done a wonderful job in producing a first-rate volume. About the only problem is in the reproduction of the two huge Frith paintings: could they have not been reproduced on fold-out pages rather than divided in the centre so that the very middle of the paintings vanish into the binding? But in general this is a volume worth the price.

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ROGER COOTER, *Phrenology in the British Isles: an annotated, historical bibliobibliography and index*, Metuchen NJ and London, Scarecrow Press, 1989, 8vo, pp. xviii, 431, £47.25. Dist. Bailey Bros & Swinfen Ltd., Folkestone.

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This valuable biography plus bibliography lists over a thousand individuals and numerous journals and institutions, the entries ranging from very brief to highly informative, and the whole supported by over two thousand bibliographical references. Problems of selection must have been great but the result achieved is wide in scope and rich in content. An outline of the author's interpretation of the history of phrenology serves as an introductory guide, and some themes are implicit in the selection of biographical material.

Phrenology, as a "philosophical" pursuit or as a popular "science", touched on so many fields of interest—from orthodox and heterodox medicine to radical politics and religion—that a wide range of scholars will find this volume an illuminating source of reference. And local historians, even if their more obscure phrenologists do not appear, are likely to be rewarded with entries shining unexpected light onto their concerns.

The focus of interest of modern scholars on phrenology during the first half of the nineteenth century is reflected, for example, in a contrast between the detailed itemization of communications to the *Phrenological Journal* (1823–47) and a much restricted selection of papers from phrenological periodicals late in the century. But its final decades, and even those of the early twentieth century, are not neglected. The "professors" and "pier phrenologists" are recorded, and some who "read heads" on Blackpool sands.

A book so full of interest invites browsing; but references to topics or to persons not listed alphabetically in the biographies can be traced through an efficient index. This allows easy access to entries recording the association of phrenologists with, say, Swedenborgianism, Methodism, socialism or geology, or identifying practitioners active in particular parts of the country. A select bibliography of modern writings about phrenology rounds off a volume replete with well presented information.

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R. M. MURRAY and T. H. TURNER (eds.), *Lectures on the history of psychiatry: the Squibb series*, London, Gaskell (an imprint of the Royal College of Psychiatrists), 1990, 8vo, pp. xi, 223, illus., £10.00 (paperback).

Six of the twelve Squibb lectures in this book have been published before. All but two of those in print for the second time were delivered by professional historians (as opposed to psychiatrists): the exceptions are Trevor Turner's, and Edward Hare's description of the disappearance of "insane ear" and other manifestations of asylum life (that were, and are, often attributed to bad management). The historians' reappearance in this context is welcome. Turner's Introduction says that they are staking an increasing number of claims in the territory that is the history of psychiatry; but in his own lecture, on the population of Ticehurst Asylum in the second half of the nineteenth century, he suggests that their interest might more properly be classified as the history of *madness*. The book will indeed interest historiographers, as well as historians, of psychiatry, taking as it does a slice that comprises 15 years' worth of invited lectures. Thus, Michael MacDonald in 1980 gave a very forthright explanation for broad swathes of eighteenth-century "madness" as latitudinarian Anglicanism's response to popular religion. Roy Porter delivered one of his most stylish exercises in the representation of a madman's story, which properly leaves the reader thoroughly confused as to the "boundaries between sanity and insanity" (1985); and Andrew Scull's is an equally entertaining, but infinitely more distressing, history of how people in New Jersey came to be ashamed of toothlessness in the 1920s (1986). These three historians are often called upon to represent a new historiography of madness, its construction, its voice, and its reception: not a coherent programme, and one that by no means subsumes these articles, or the historiographical patterns that do emerge in this collection as a whole.

W. F. Bynum's account of the rise of British neurology and German Berrios's of the construction of the "cognitive paradigm" for dementia are particularly notable for the breadth of their geographical and temporal comparisons, and for the immediacy of their implications for current practice. Alexander Walk lectured on Henry Maudsley, Patricia Allderidge on the