

Book Reviews

Murken attempts to explain to a wider audience how Beuys's imagery is taken from scientific and, in particular, medical themes. As if to emphasize this, the felt book-cover is designed to look like a first aid kit. Murken, despite his claim that the artist's life needs consideration, does not explain the significance felt has for Beuys (during the war Beuys was saved from certain death from exposure by being wrapped in fat and felt).

Having discussed his influence on the art world, Murken goes on to introduce the basic themes in Beuys's work. He follows this with an account of Beuys's intellectual and artistic development which is largely repeated in a later chapter on the medical aspects of his work. The book ends with an edited interview with Beuys, as disjointed and confusing as Murken's text. Footnotes and illustration references in the German have at times been misplaced or omitted in the parallel English text, which includes many irritating typographical errors.

Murken tries to explain Beuys's work by using superficial references to such diverse fields as the writings of Paracelsus, to alchemy, to homoeopathy, and to anthroposophy. To add to the confusion, he delights in the use of metaphysical jargon and neologisms such as "symbolloaded", "selfexperienced", "human-ness", and occasionally refers to works not actually illustrated. The art objects described are laden with medical artefacts and symbols, and these Murken describes as "multi-level" and "unmistakable" in meaning. However, they are often obscure or paradoxically banal.

We are informed that Beuys aims to integrate the disciplines of art and science, although elsewhere scientific processes are seen as a deliberate contrast to the irrational. With such contradictions, one can question whether Murken's eulogy on Beuys's interpretation of medicine is anything but superficial.

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JOHN B. BLAKE (editor) *Centenary of Index Medicus, 1879–1979*, Bethesda, Md., National Institutes of Health, National Library of Medicine, 1980, pp. vii, 115, \$7.00 + \$1.75 postage.

The world of medical bibliography owes an immeasurable debt to those twin products of the Surgeon-General's Library and John Shaw Billings, the *Index-Catalogue* and *Index Medicus*, and it was a happy idea for the National Library of Medicine to celebrate the centenary of the *Index Medicus* by a symposium on medical bibliographical topics held in May 1979. Of the eight papers in this volume, half relate more or less directly to the object of the commemoration and half to more general topics in the relationship between medicine and bibliography. Most display a bibliographical knowledge by no means narrowly medical.

Frank B. Rogers's '*Index Medicus* in the twentieth century' is the paper most closely related to the title of the volume. He surveys the progress of the *Index Medicus* and related publications, partly from personal experience, with reflections on the past and future development of subject-indexing and a look forward to modern information retrieval systems.

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John B. Blake examines the work of Billings and stresses the scope of the indexing and abstracting sources available prior to the foundation of the *Index-Catalogue* and *Index Medicus*. He concludes with an illuminating analysis of the bibliography appended by Billings to his M.D. thesis on the treatment of epilepsy by trephination.

Genevieve Miller's account of 'The nineteenth-century medical press' is primarily concerned with the American scene. She emphasizes the dependence of American medical publishing on editions and translations of European works, and gives an interesting account of some peculiar features of book distribution in an expanding and largely rural society.

Edwin Wolf 2nd in his 'Medical books in colonial Philadelphia' reminds the reader that a general library, such as the Library Company of Philadelphia, may have important medical holdings, in this case largely due to the collecting activities of the Logan family. Philadelphia was a focal point of the eighteenth-century American medical world and it is surprising that the Library Company has not received more attention from medical historians. His bibliography is particularly valuable for the amount of material listed which was published in non-medical books and periodicals.

K. Garth Huston on *The physician as bibliographer and bibliophile* covers a wide range of interesting figures from Walter Charleton to Sir Geoffrey Keynes (not, strictly speaking, a physician), concentrating particularly on the latter and his many and varied achievements.

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THEODORE I. MALININ, *Surgery and life. The extraordinary career of Alexis Carrel*, London and New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979, 8vo, pp. xiii, 242, illus., £8.40.

There is still little known in depth of the scientific work and methodological approach of some of the master-builders of modern surgery such as T. Billroth and T. Kocher. However, more is known about Alexis Carrel (1873–1944). Their general views on medicine and surgery as parts of the culture of their times have been investigated even less. Despite this, Dr. Malinin's book deliberately centres on Carrel's scientific accomplishments. He presents these, Carrel's broad and reflective mind, and his more public activities, in a well-balanced manner. This allows a monolithic insight into the motivation for the results and evaluation of both clinical research and laboratory biology during the first four decades of our century.

Born in France, Carrel did the bulk of his work at the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research in New York. He was a great innovator: of a successful method of suturing blood vessels, of antiseptic treatment of war wounds (with Charles Dakin), of organ transplantation, and of invaluable *in vitro* techniques such as tissue and organ culture (with Charles Lindbergh). Deeply impressed by a miraculous cure he witnessed at Lourdes, he also acknowledged in his best-selling book entitled *Man the unknown* (1935) the limits of highly specialized sciences and technology for the understanding of the human being. While Carrel admitted that some of his arguments on, for example, criminality, education, *élites*, and sexuality were not then