

### Book Reviews

producing “whole” men, and always remained true in spirit to his original Franciscan vocation to communicate truth in a joyous and jocular style.

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ENID RHODES PESCHEL (editor), *Medicine and literature*, New York, Neale Watson Academic Publications, 1980, 8vo, pp. xix, 204, \$15.00.

This collection of essays by American academics ranges widely over European and American literature of the first and second ranks from the Renaissance to the present day, touching on most conceivable connexions between medicine and literature; the doctor as author and as character; medicine as a tool of the biographer and the literary critic; the use of medical metaphors and symbols to convey sociological, psychological, and metaphysical insights or messages; even the role of literature in medical education. There are probably few totally original contributions to literary criticism, and one or two essays may appear naïve or pretentiously abstract, but they have the merit of being comprehensible without first-hand knowledge of the authors discussed, and together they form a stimulating exercise in thematic comparative literature. The only medico-literary phenomena left largely untreated are the doctor as a figure of fun or sensational horror: the examples chosen invariably show him in a pathetic, tragic, or heroic light, and the emphasis on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries reinforces the tendency for doctors to appear in a quasi-sacerdotal role in relation to the new creed of social humanism, with harsh judgement passed on the inadequate or renegade. The same pervasive earnestness is evident in the collection's propagandist undertone, its call for literary studies to humanize clinical practice, and for medical men to turn to creative writing not only to establish human contact between their profession and the laity but also to rescue literature from incipient verbal nihilism with a dose of reality. This vision of literature as an extension of or substitute for medical practice has a distinguished sponsor as far back as Rabelais, but like the non-evaluative approach of most essays, it raises, without answering them, questions about the interrelationships of creativity and experience, of artistic and scientific truth, of conviction and communication.

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LUTZ RICHTER-BERNBURG, *Persian medical manuscripts at the University of California, Los Angeles. A descriptive catalogue*, Malibu, Calif., 1978, 4to, pp. xxii, 297, [no price stated].

The medical manuscript collection of University of California, Los Angeles, consisting of 132 Persian and two Arabic titles, although rather small, is of a remarkable quality which should appeal to anyone interested in the history of Persian medicine. Its historical value is due to the fact that the collection covers almost all the classical period during which the Persian language was used to write on medical subjects (beginning of the fifth to the end of the thirteenth century A.H.), and includes the

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works of the most prominent authors such as: Zarrindast, Ismā'īl Djurdjānī, Maṣṣūr b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, Ḥadjī Zain al-Aṭṭār, and Muḥammad Arzānī.

Appreciating this, Richter-Bernburg puts an intense effort into the analysis of the content of each manuscript, which, unusually for collections of Persian manuscripts, is not overshadowed by the beauty of the miniatures and illustrations. This enhances the catalogue's value as a useful source for Persian medical history. The entries are comprehensive, each containing a detailed description of various sections and even sub-sections of the text for almost every manuscript. In the case of more prominent works, such as *Dhakhīrah-yi Khārazmshāhī* by Ismā'īl Djurdjānī, these descriptions are followed by a remarkable amount of information on the author's life and professional experiences, which is usually analysed in detail. Neither is the physical make-up of the manuscripts neglected. Adequate information on this is given, and, in particular, damaged folios are accurately recorded. In dealing with the Persian text itself, particularly for more comprehensive works, in addition to the incipit and explicit of each manuscript, the incipits of the important sections also appear in the entry. This is of great assistance to scholars who do not have access to the actual manuscript. The proper names mentioned in each entry appear only in English, in a system of transliteration which is slightly different from that of the new edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Except for a brief note in the preface, no information is given about the provenance of the collection as a whole or of any of the individual manuscripts. This note implies that the collection was brought together by a Western-educated physician in contemporary Iran. This is a further indication that more attention has been paid by the cataloguer to the collection as a number of medical works significant for their texts than to the history of their provenance. References to other existing manuscripts of a given text are made to comprehensive and reliable sources such as C. A. Storey's *Bio-bibliographical survey* and A. Munzawi's *Union catalogue of Persian manuscripts*. Indexes of titles, proper names, and incipits provide an easy access to the wealth of information in the catalogue.

This descriptive catalogue of Persian medical manuscripts at the University of California, Los Angeles, will, as the title suggests, be of more importance to scholars interested in the history of Persian medicine than to those who admire the especial physical beauty of Persian manuscripts from an artistic point of view.

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MACDONALD CRITCHLEY, *The divine banquet of the brain and other essays*, New York, Raven Press, 1979, 8vo, pp. viii, 267, illus., \$20.40.

Macdonald Critchley's active association with the National Hospital, Queen Square, has extended over half a century and more. He is the doyen of British neurologists; this collection of twenty-eight of his essays, papers, and speeches demonstrates why. Several are apparently previously unpublished, while others originally appeared between 1955 and 1975 in a variety of books and journals.

Critchley ranges widely over clinical neurology, the history of neurology, art, culture, and literature. From several viewpoints, this volume shows his continuing pre-occupation with the evolution of speech and its disorders; with what might be called