

Book Reviews

Michael MacDonald's piece on the social history of suicide—represent summaries of an author's previous, more detailed scholarship. A number provide preliminary offerings of new ideas and information, which the reader imagines will go on to appear with elaboration in larger scholarly form. Examples of this last category are Ian Dowbiggin's brief study of theories of paranoia in French mental medicine and Eric Engstrom's discussion of the social and institutional factors informing the formation of Emil Kraepelin's psychiatric thought and practice.

My one frustration with the book concerns its skimpy introductory apparatus. A volume running to nearly 700 pages surely requires more than a two-and-a-half page introduction. In particular, I missed a strong editorial statement about the basic epistemology of the book's subject: both historically and conceptually, what is meant by the categories "disorder", "syndrome", "disease", and "illness"? Other primary terms and categories, such as "organic", "functional", "neurosis", and "psychosis", also go unexplicated. Similarly, given its prominence in the organization of the volume, some general words about the interface between the clinical and social in the history of medicine would have been appropriate.

Nevertheless, this book retains great value as a work of reference. For non-specialists, it is perhaps the best place to begin to learn about a given topic, a quick and reliable guide into the large literatures on each of these subjects. Like so many of the essay collections and reference works that have poured forth from the Wellcome factory in the past decade, *A history of clinical psychiatry* was a project eminently worth undertaking.

Mark S Micale, University of Manchester

Christopher Fox, Roy Porter, Robert Wokler (eds), *Inventing human science: eighteenth-century domains*, Berkeley and London, University of California Press, 1995, pp. xv, 357, £24.00, \$45.00 (0-520-20010-1).

While the "science of man" was, as Christopher Fox states in his introduction, a central concern of the Enlightenment, few in that period agreed upon the content of that science. The modern notion of anthropology constitutes (literally) a "science of man", but Enlightenment discussion encompassed far more than this term implies and included especially medicine and political thought. Fox argues that modern disciplinary divisions make this fragmentation seem more apparent than real, but the disciplinary divisions of this book itself tend to reinforce the diffuse nature of the topic.

The eleven essays in this volume overlap only somewhat. Although David Hume, Adam Smith, Charles de Montesquieu, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau make several appearances, other figures such as Georges Buffon command a more limited stage. The general emphasis is on the Anglo-French world, with occasional discussion of the German-speaking countries and Italy. There is much for historians of medicine to think about in this volume, not least the relationship, or lack of it, between seventeenth-century natural philosophy and the "human science" of the Enlightenment. The progressivist, "onward march of science" concept of eighteenth-century thought is effectively laid to rest, replaced by a more nuanced and complex view.

Robert Wokler examines what he calls "conjectural histories" of the progress of humankind to trace the idea of human nature and the replacement of morality with material causes as the determinant of human behaviour. Roger Smith and Gary Hatfield extend and refine this theme in their essays. Smith focuses on the term "nature" and its meaning in the Enlightenment. He argues that "the category 'human nature' remained largely unquestioned and provided the ahistorical language in terms of which historical change was intelligible". Hatfield demonstrates that the notion of a science of mind did not necessarily imply a move toward a materialist programme. Ludmilla Jordanova further deconstructs the term "human science" in her essay on gender, pointing out that to many Enlightenment

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thinkers, the “science of man” meant exactly that and did not include women; and that “nature” provided the foundation of difference, not its erasure.

Additional exploration of the meaning of “science” is provided by Phillip Sloan in his magisterial essay on the natural history of man. He concentrates on Linnaeus and Buffon, practising scientists with very different views of what constituted human science. The ultimate synthesis of Linnaean classification with Buffon’s historical view of development underlay much nineteenth-century discourse on humans as animals.

Roy Porter’s essay on ‘Medical science and human science’ underlines the uncertain relationship between these two topics. While medicine became more scientific—in theory if not in practice—over the course of the eighteenth century, the role of medicine in the larger Enlightenment project remained ambiguous. Despite Peter Gay’s assertion that medicine was central to the Enlightenment “recovery of nerve”, Porter sees not a causal arrow but a complex interplay of ideas among which medicine was one of many. Gloria Flaherty’s account of the so-called “non-normal sciences” such as mesmerism, Franz Joseph Gall’s “organology” and Johann Caspar Lavater’s notions of physiognomy serves to undermine yet more the claims to science of eighteenth-century medicine.

Essays on society, politics, and political economy further extend the range of human science. This volume provides a good introduction to some of the central questions of Enlightenment thought. A collection of essays, when it is as well-organized as this one, can be worth far more than the sum of its parts.

Anita Guerrini, University of California,
Santa Barbara

Keith Moore, with additions by **Mary Sampson**, *A guide to the archives and manuscripts of The Royal Society*, London, The Royal Society, 1995, pp. ix, 72, illus., £15.00 (UK), £16.50 (overseas) (0-85403-500-1).

Shirley Dixon, Lesley Hall, Julia Sheppard, *A guide to the Contemporary Medical Archives Centre*, London, Wellcome Trust, 1995, pp. 101, illus., £5.00 (+50p p&p) (1-869835-66-2).

Writing a guide to the contents of a record repository is no mean task. I can vouch for this, since at Lambeth Palace Library the preparation of our guide was in progress as long ago as 1962; it has yet to appear. Readers’ enquiries, acquisitions, the listing of new collections and a thousand other tasks intrude, with more pressing deadlines. Then there are voices in the profession which question whether it is worthwhile to publish a guide at all, when new acquisitions soon render it incomplete. Is it necessary when the on-line searching of databases increasingly offers more immediate access to information? The answer from the researcher’s point of view is certainly yes. Every scholar who enters a record office for the first time needs the essential orientation, the first steps in formulating a search strategy, which the guide provides.

All the more credit goes to the authors of the two guides reviewed here. They present succinct, intelligible accounts of collections which are of fundamental importance to historians of science and medicine. Each of the two guides condenses within a short space a wealth of information, without becoming bogged down in detail. The presentation is clear and comprehensive, and pointers are given to finding aids and published sources where further information may be sought.

The Royal Society has been a careful custodian of its administrative records since its foundation in 1660, and it has also been active in collecting the personal papers of its Fellows. The resulting accumulation is inspiring rich, from the papers of Robert Boyle in the seventeenth century to those of twentieth-century scientists, which are recorded here for the first time. Medical historians will be drawn to the papers of Sir Charles Blagden, Sir Henry Dale, Howard Florey and Otto Loewi amongst others. But the *Guide* is most valuable for its