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importantly (and despite alienists' claims to the contrary), that the choice between them was (and remains) inherently evaluative.

Alienists who attempted to dispute this last point were repeatedly impeached by their own inability to agree on a diagnosis. The embarrassment of having eminent men testify that the same individual was both unambiguously mad and unquestionably sane was something the profession felt deeply but could never adequately resolve. Moreover, medico-psychological descriptions of the accused's actions exhibited striking similarities to commonsense, everyday descriptions of conduct, something that was not to be hidden by incantations of scientific truth and appeals to physicalist causation. Nor, in the last analysis, did alienists possess "the requisite standing for the public acceptance of 'clinical facts.'" (p. 40).

Smith's discussion of these issues is notable for its empirical richness and theoretical sophistication. The scope of his research is impressive and its presentation is for the most part skilfully handled. *Trial by medicine* is consequently a major contribution to our understanding of medico-legal history.

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MICHAEL MACDONALD, *Mystical Bedlam. Madness, anxiety, and healing in seventeenth-century England*, Cambridge University Press, 1981, 8vo, pp. x, 323, £27.50.

Many of the most exciting historical studies of the past decade have exploited caches of manuscript material which illuminate social realities, mental structures, or off-stage activities not visible through printed historical sources. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's *Montaillou*, Carlo Ginzburg's *The cheese and the worms*, and Robert Darnton's *The business of Enlightenment* are three examples noteworthy for their imaginative use of these raw materials of history. It is no exaggeration to claim a similar feat of fertile historical scholarship for Michael Macdonald. *Mystical Bedlam* is based on the extensive case records of Richard Napier (1559–1634), a clergyman and astrological physician who quietly practised medicine for almost forty years in Great Linford, Buckinghamshire, in the parish where he was also rector. Because of Napier's well-known interest in alchemy, Elias Ashmole acquired the former's books and papers after his death, whence they ultimately went to the University of Oxford. (A. L. Rowse's study of the randy astrological physician Simon Forman was made possible through the same bequest.)

Napier's sixty volumes of case notes cover forty-five years (including six years after the elder Napier's death, when the practice was continued by his nephew). They record tens of thousands of consultations, including almost 2,500 with patients suffering from mental complaints or disturbances. It is this group which Macdonald has subjected to rigorous analysis. His many charts, tables, and graphs break these down into such categories as age, sex, and geographical distribution; symptoms and their perceived causes; and diagnoses. Some of his tables overwhelm the reader with rather too much detail, particularly since some of his smaller sub-categories are not statistically significant and in any event are reconstructed on what are often extremely fragmentary case histories. But Macdonald's decision to be ruthlessly complete can be applauded, for it has forced him to consider the totality of Napier's psychiatric practice. Thus, we learn that women consulted Napier more than men, young adults more frequently than either older people or children, and that personal distress lay at the heart of many of his patients' psychiatric problems. His work reinforces the now commonplace recognition of the centrality of the nuclear family in pre-industrial English society, but challenges the thesis of Lawrence Stone that companionate marriages became common only in the eighteenth century, and that seventeenth-century parents distanced themselves emotionally from their children. Richard Napier's patients did not: many of them came with what a modern psychiatrist would undoubtedly call a reactive depression, caused by the death of a spouse or child.

Although Napier's case histories provide the core of this book, Macdonald firmly locates Napier's beliefs into the larger context of early seventeenth-century England. Drawing on the medical and theological literature of the period, he shows the extent to which medical, magical, and theological precepts often coalesced in the explanation and treatment of mentally

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disturbed individuals. Many of Napier's patients believed themselves bewitched or possessed, and although Napier himself used occult procedures in making diagnoses – casting horoscopes or conjuring up the Archangel Raphael – he approached his patients with a subtle blend of shrewdness and common sense. For Napier, the “supernatural” was just as real as the “natural”.

Macdonald's discussions of religion, magic, and witchcraft complement those of Keith Thomas, to whom he acknowledges his indebtedness. Like Thomas, he finds a perceptible decline in the pervasiveness of fervent religious belief as the seventeenth century turned into the eighteenth and doctors and liberally-minded clergymen viewed as disease the religious enthusiasms of an earlier generation. For the insane, he contends, the triumph of the rational, scientific outlook of the Enlightenment was “a disaster” (p. 230). This probably overstates the case, for our own knowledge of eighteenth-century psychiatry is still limited. We need a Macdonald of the Enlightenment: someone who will go beyond the caricatures and stereotypes for that period as he has so eloquently achieved for the age of Robert Burton and Richard Napier.

It is a shame that the Cambridge University Press have seen fit to stick so appalling a price on a book which deserves such wide circulation.

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WALTER HOFFMANN-AXTHELM, *History of dentistry*, Berlin and Chicago, Quintessence Publishing Co., 1981, 8vo, pp. 435, illus., \$100.00.

The first part of this beautifully produced book deals with the development of dentistry from earliest times to its establishment as an independent profession in the eighteenth century. Successive chapters describe dental procedures and dental cures in ancient Egypt, India, China and Japan, pre-Columbian America, Greece and Rome, the Byzantine Kingdom and Europe in the Early Middle Ages, Islam, the High and Late Middle Ages, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and finally the eighteenth century. The second part of the book concentrates on dentistry in the industrial age and describes the rapid advances which have been made in prosthetics, conservative dentistry, dental surgery, orthodontics, and in research and teaching. Each chapter has a comprehensive list of references, and the 529 illustrations provide a splendid complement to the wealth of information in the text. Descriptions of early dental operations abound, together with cures for toothache ranging from a mixture of earthworms, frog hearts, and rabbit brains to the eleven cautery points on the body (but not the head) shown in a thirteenth-century manuscript in the Bodleian Library. The causes of dental disease were not understood, and as late as the eighteenth century it was believed that worms caused decay from within the tooth. However, the last hundred and fifty years have seen the application of scientific method to the diagnosis and treatment of oral diseases, and the development of materials for repairing decayed teeth and replacing lost ones by fixed bridges or removable dentures. The author has given an excellent account of the main landmarks in this period with interesting details of the leading personalities and of their work. An example is his description of the early experiments with general anaesthesia and the tragic deaths of Horace Wells, the first to demonstrate nitrous oxide, and of William Morton and Charles Jackson who used ether and then quarrelled bitterly and expensively over their respective claims for priority. The work of John Tomes, Charles Tomes, and other British dentists is described, and there is an illustration of the Dental Hospital of London in Soho Square in 1858.

No-one with any interest in dentistry or in dental history should miss the pleasure of reading this book; it reveals the rapid development of a profession after centuries practically bereft of progress, and provides an ideal base for further reading and research. Libraries should buy the book, many individuals will want to, in spite of the price.

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