

Book Reviews

middle-aged lesbian reveals 'that the mother was owner of a brothel' as the cause. Severe vertigo is traced to the patient possibly having seen her father urinating: the case confirms 'the optimistic assertion that the prognosis for the psychoanalysis of agoraphobia, given a long time for treatment, is an entirely favourable one'. And so on through 'obscene words', 'morning erections', 'smoking', 'ingratitude', to 'obesity', 'fear of heights', 'Hamlet and literary creativity'—all the old favourites are here.

It is appropriate that this book should be reviewed in a journal devoted to medical history. It is a period piece of psychiatric history when it was more fruitful to attempt to discover the causes of illness in men's minds than in their bodies. Born before the days of investigative medicine, bred in Victorian culture and the morals of a generation not yet liberated by the advent of reliable antibiotics and contraception; nurtured in the creative fantasy of a genius; spiced with free discussion and description in endless permutations and combinations of taboo topics—all this has left its date stamp on its products.

'When physicians became entangled within the vortices of metaphysics, every thing was explained agreeably to the new philosophy' commented Dr. George Man Burrows in 1817. 'Nothing was so attractive and seducing as the solution of the mysterious operations of the human mind . . . Hence the aberrations of the intellect were arranged as specific diseases, and the research for first causes was overlooked in the contemplation of their effects.' At the present time, when scientific and technological advances offer a real prospect of finding 'first causes' of mental disorders, a reborn Freud would not have to turn away from its daughter specialty neurology in search of pathogenic mechanisms. He might not even quarrel with the seeming paradox that psychotherapy will find its greatest application in helping those whose underlying disease cannot yet be cured, and helping the brain-damaged to adjust.

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Intemeietorul Anatomiei Moderne Andreas Vesalius, by MIHAI IONESCU, Tirgu-Mures, Directia Sanitara a Judetului Mures, Serviciul de Educatie Sanitara, 1969, pp. 66, illus.

This modestly produced booklet is the first monograph in Rumanian on Vesalius, written by the chief surgeon and lecturer in the department of human anatomy in the Medical and Pharmaceutical Institute of Tirgu-Mures. The text is a straightforward account of the life and work of Vesalius in its proper setting of renaissance medicine. Although medical education on the university level is a peculiarly modern development in Rumania, there was some interchange of doctors between Rumania and countries of western Europe as early as the sixteenth century, and the first and other early editions of the *Fabrica* are to be found in Rumanian libraries. Despite the great interest which Rumanian doctors have shown in the history of medicine during the past fifty years—and the International Congress of the History of Medicine is to be held in Bucharest in September 1970—the list of references bears witness to the inadequate lines of communication between Rumania and other 'western' countries today, for the names of Cushing and O'Malley do not appear there.

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