

Book Reviews

orthodox; for Flynn, although language inscribes and revises reality, the body is a fixed term: a formless mass of base material which frustrates inscription and transcendence. Moreover, it has no anatomy or physiology. Although she mentions George Cheyne's *English malady*, she does not consider the implications of the psychosomatic nature of this disease. The only creature in her book which enjoys "a nervous presence, a tremulous emotion sympathetic in its neurological connections" (p. 157), is a parrot shot by Robinson Crusoe (a sign of her bias towards the marginal).

Her book is deficient because Defoe and Swift are not fully represented here; but neither can they be used, as Flynn does, to represent the full range of opinion in the eighteenth century. The eighteenth-century body in her account is never revered as a temple for the soul or enjoyed as an agent of pleasure. It is always coarse, never refined, and neither governed by humours, animated by hydraulics or aetherialized by circulating nervous spirits and vibrating fibres. Bodies past and present are for Flynn "opaque material that obscure any meaning larger than their corporeal presence". (p. 9) They merely "block" the desire for transcendence which she assumes was the primary ideal of the eighteenth century.

Judith Hawley, London

J. WORTH ESTES, *Dictionary of protopharmacology: therapeutic practices, 1700–1850*, Canton, Mass., Science History Publications USA, 1990, pp. xvii, 229, illus., \$49.95 (0–88135–068–0).

Dr Estes has designed this book to fill a long-felt want amongst the reference tools at the command of students of medical history. The *Dictionary of protopharmacology* is attractively produced but unfortunately not entirely satisfactory.

The origins of pharmacology in the modern sense are usually traced to the appointment of the German Rudolf Buchheim (1820–1879) to the University of Dorpat (Tartu, Estonia), in 1847, with a forerunner in France in the person of François Magendie (1783–1855). Today pharmacology is regarded as an experimental science in which the responses and interactions of living tissues to chemical substances are studied. In the first half of the nineteenth century it had a very different meaning, being rather a combination of therapeutics and materia medica. In Jonathan Pereira's day (died 1853), it concerned itself with the traditional therapeutic use of drugs, their preparation, origins, and constituents; the sciences of botany, zoology, chemistry, and pharmacy were brought into play, but not that of physiology. So one may well ask, when the term "proto-pharmacology" is used, which "pharmacology" is meant? The sub-title, *Therapeutic practices*, is in fact the better of the two.

In the introduction, called 'Directions for use', Dr Estes writes that he has "focussed most entries . . . around the botanical nomenclatures and chemical concepts around the 1794 edition of the *Edinburgh Dispensatory*" (New Dispensatory?), and this is apparent. Anyone who has worked on the inventories of the early eighteenth-century apothecaries will find many omissions, as there are from the earlier pharmacopoeias. The *Pharmacopoeia Londinensis* of 1721 names twelve animals, of which seven are not listed in this *Dictionary*. Surprisingly, pharmacopoeias are not listed at all, whether from London or Edinburgh or the Continent, such as that of Württemberg which for a time had a considerable vogue.

Cross-referencing is incomplete and inconsistent. Although 'Cerevisiae' are noted, 'Beers' are not; although 'Chloroform' appears, the name by which it was commonly known, "chloric ether" does not; 'Ether' has the note "see Aether Vitriolicus" but proves not to be listed. Quinine is cross-referenced to 'Cinchoma', as is 'Morphine' to 'Opium', but the same cannot be said for emetine and strychnine in respect to ipecacuanha and nux vomica. A brave attempt has been made to discuss the difficult question of weights and measures but has unfortunately not clarified the subject entirely. The well-known and frequently used sign for a pint is omitted, and, in England at least, 'oz' was taken to mean an avoirdupois, not apothecary, ounce. The meaning of the line, "1 lb. Apothecary (or Troy) = 5760/7000 lb. Avoirdupois" is not readily understood when it appears in a section relating American customary measures to international metric terms. Possibly it is a type-setting error, such as has occurred on pp. 34, 35 with the word 'CALIB'.

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Unlike so many books published today, spelling mistakes are few, though it is a pity that the only occasion Oswald Schmiedeberg's name is mentioned it is spelt incorrectly. There is a useful list of symbols which may be encountered in earlier documents. Particularly useful are the definitions describing the site and mode of drug actions as they were understood in the eighteenth century and on into the next one. Terms such as "diaphoretic" and "emetic" are of course readily understood today, but "discutient", "alternative", "restringent" and "antihectic" are not.

The bibliography is remarkably uneven. Three listings are given to Ann Leighton's work on American gardens, as well as other botanical works, and yet Jonathan Pereira's influential *Elements of materia medica and therapeutics*, William Salmon's translation of George Bates's *Dispensatory* (which he called *Pharmacopoeia Bateana*), and John Quincy's *Dispensatory* and William Lewis's up-dated versions are all omitted. A particularly useful inclusion would have been John Ayrton Paris's *Pharmacologia* of 1812 with its centuries-old materia medica but the first glimmerings of understanding how substances react in the body.

There is no doubt that a book of this nature is needed, but one gains the impression that too little thought has been given to the project. One looks forward to an amended and enlarged second edition.

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GUNTER MANN and FRANZ DUMONT (eds), *Die Natur des Menschen: Probleme der physischen Anthropologie und Rassenkunde (1750–1850)*, Soemmerring-Forschungen 6, Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur Mainz, Stuttgart, Gustav Fischer, 1990, 8vo, pp. 457, DM 128.00.

"Soemmerring-Forschungen" is an ambitious historical project, inaugurated by Gunter Mann, and aiming to point out the major scientific developments during the "Goethezeit". The six volumes already published demonstrate that the interests of Professor Mann and his collaborators mainly focus on medical, physiological, and biological topics, which are more or less related to the anatomist Samuel Thomas Soemmerring, whose *Opera Omnia* (including letters and diaries) are being prepared for publication. The volume under review is based on an interdisciplinary symposium, which was organized to investigate the various approaches to human nature in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

It is impossible to do justice to nineteen contributions, especially since they deal with heterogeneous aspects like physiology, brain anatomy, philosophy, books of travels, or anthropology. Most of the articles are characterized by an impressive scholarship. The reader is provided with careful analyses of concepts by scientists and philosophers like Georges Buffon, Immanuel Kant, Johann Gottfried Herder, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, Christoph Girtanner, Franz Joseph Gall, Petrus Camper, and Georges Cuvier. Numerous aspects like the debates between the "monogenists" and "polygenists" in the eighteenth century or the social background for comparative studies of the brains of white and black people are very well presented. Another fascinating point is the connection between natural history and the "Ästhetisierung der Natur", which—as it is plausibly shown—was a direct consequence of Johann Joachim Winckelmann's theory of the classical beau ideal. It seems that this relation remained a constant factor during the Enlightened and Romantic periods, and I would have wished to get more details about this.

The only problematic point of this volume is the unquestioned juxtaposition of articles written from different methodological viewpoints. Some authors reflect the social and the cultural background, others prefer a more "internal" historical view. This is not necessarily a disadvantage, but the result is a rather heterogeneous picture of anthropological discussion at that time. The editors, however, are perfectly aware of this. Mann states in the preface that he regards the various articles as material for further research, leaving unanswered the question whether or not more systematic theories on the eighteenth-century life sciences like the ones by Michel Foucault and Wolf Lepenies get support from this volume. Apart from this