

Book Notices

ROBERT HENRY WELKER, *Natural man. The life of William Beebe*, Bloomington and London, Indiana University Press, 1975, 8vo, pp. xv, 224, illus., £8.00.

William Beebe (1877–1962) began his career as an ornithologist, then became an observer of marine life, and finally turned to entymology. He had the rare gift of being able to report the results of his scientific investigations with skill, and at the same time producing popular articles based on his adventures as a scientist and explorer. At one time he was the best known nature writer in the U.S.A. and produced about twenty books on various themes. Some of them concerned his daring descents in his bathysphere, and his exploration of the jungles of Venezuela. Mr. Welker's biography is a sympathetic survey of an outstanding and articulate pioneer-naturalist.

WOLFGANG WIELAND, *Diagnose Überlegungen zur Medizintheorie*, Berlin and New York, W. de Gruyter, 1975, 8vo, pp. x, 176, DM. 36.00.

This book deals essentially with the theory and methodology of diagnosis. No diagnosis can be made from a single fact and a plurality of facts will often lead to a plurality of possible diagnoses. Once a choice between these possibilities has been made, the physician will usually defend his diagnosis even if further facts make it doubtful. This may be a completely unconscious process, motivated by observation, logic, and also by prestige. The use of computers for diagnosis is discussed, but for this the basic concepts of disease would have to be changed. Is disease more than an accumulation of symptoms caused by genetic and acute physical and possibly psychological factors? Is the idea of syndromes out of date because the factors can be combined in all kinds of permutations? Can a computer show the sum total of a situation for a valid diagnosis? All in all, this book will appeal only to those who find discussions of methodology interesting and fruitful.

BOOKS ALSO RECEIVED

(The inclusion of a title in this list does not preclude the possibility of subsequent review.)

JOSEPH AGASSI, *The continuing revolution. A history of physics from the Greeks to Einstein*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1968, pp. 225, illus., \$5.95.

MARK D. ALTSCHULE, *What medicine is about. Using its past to improve its future*, Boston, Mass., Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine, 1975, pp. [vi], 100, [no price stated].

LLOYD DEMAUSE (editor), *The new psychohistory*, New York, Psychohistory Press, 1975, pp. [vi], 313, illus., \$12.95.

Robbery of dead bodies, (Studies in Labour History, No. 1), Brighton, John L. Noyce, 1976, pp. 31, £1.40.