personality of specific individuals—historical, like Swift, Milton, Pope and Savage, and fictional, like the characters ("Dick Linger", "Sober", "Cupidus" and so forth) who populate the *Rambler* and *Idler* essays. Unsurprisingly, Johnson's reading of human psychology at large is shown to reflect his own propensities—indeed, it served as an attempt to resolve the crises afflicting his own intra-psychic life, notably the deep and lasting melancholy that he feared might lead to madness itself. (Gross, it should be added, does not press the rather extreme notion that Johnson came near to true insanity.)

This invisible riot of the mind argues, surely correctly, that Johnson was an exceptionally acute psychologist and self-analyst—which is not to deny that he could frequently be wilfully blind—he had, Gross notes, a strong grasp of the human tendency to take refuge in self-delusion. Without dogmatically setting Johnson on the couch, Gross highlights the violently contradictory urges and needs inflaming the passions of one who had struggled so desperately to rise in life ("Slow rises worth by poverty depress'd") only finally to find that success itself was insipid and failed to dispel depression. Because of a profound sense of inadequacy and deep guilt feelings, Johnson was one who could rarely *enjoy* prosperity, remaining almost pathologically pugnacious. Envy, rage, anxiety and the desire to dominate loom large in Johnson's self-perceptions and in his account of human motivation. He judged mankind to be driven by irresistible subterranean forces, insatiable cravings for gratification. To stave off misery and vacuity, the human imagination lost itself in fantasy worlds, dangerous because they ran riot, out of control, tyrannizing the reason.

Johnson espoused something like a Freudian sense of the unconscious, Gross suggests: a perception of mankind as gripped by dark, primitive irrational impulses. This hypothesis is advanced judiciously. Gross is not suggesting that Johnson was some kind of "precursor" of Freud or that Freudian depth psychiatry will completely explicate the author of *Rasselas*. Rather it is her contention that the key to Johnson's genius—the reason why we remain fascinated by his life and still devour *The lives of the poets* or *The vanity of human wishes*—lies in his extraordinarily vivid grasp of, and capacity to empathize with, elemental human feelings and experiences. She is right. Recent scholarship has, quite properly, set Johnson in his religious and ethical contexts. Gross's reading of Johnson as a psychologist restores a neglected aspect of the writer and reminds us, *pace* Foucault, that the Enlightenment was a remarkable era for the development of a secular understanding of the human psyche.

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KATHLEEN WELLMAN, *La Mettrie: medicine, philosophy, and Enlightment*, Durham, N. C., and London, Duke University Press, 1992, pp. xiv, 342, £29.92 (0–8223–1204–2).

La Mettrie's writings provoked contemporaries to characterize him as a materialist, an atheist, a shallow philosopher, a corruptor of morals and a despicable voluptuary. This characterization seems to have been shared by the *philosophes*, who disowned him, and the churchmen of Europe, who denounced him. The mud stuck. La Mettrie retained this reputation in the nineteenth century and, claims Kathleen Wellman in this reappraisal, current accounts have all begun by assuming the handicapping to be just. In her reassessment of La Mettrie, Wellman sustains an important case for giving a great deal of weight to the medical dimension of his work. She begins with a discussion of the controversy between physicians and surgeons in early eighteenth-century Paris and argues, convincingly, that in order to understand La Mettrie's polemic this debate must be seen as a significant backdrop (context would be too strong a word, as so little is known about La Mettrie's life). She then describes the medical education she imagines La Mettrie would have received from Boerhaave. The bulk of the text is then taken up with an analysis, chronologically arranged, of La Mettrie's works. The strength of this book is undoubtedly the demonstration of La Mettrie's substantial use of medical ideas to frame his tirades. Too often the path to materialism and evolutionism has been mapped out as a philosophical course. Although historians will, rightly, dispute Wellman's detailed explication of Boerhaave's texts, especially when she includes such claims as "he

introduced the modern system of clinical instruction" (p. 62), her view that La Mettrie extensively employed the great man's medicine seems well-founded (that Boerhaave encouraged sexual reproduction as her text on p. 62 suggests seems less plausible). The fundamental problem with this book, however, is that it is an exercise in rational reconstruction. Lacking any account by La Mettrie of the purpose of his work and the reason for the sequence of it, and any evidence for its employment by contemporaries other than to dismiss it, Wellman constructs a hypothetical tale of what La Mettrie intended to do, what he really meant, how his research led him to this or that conclusion, what he thought and why, what tradition led La Mettrie to what and so forth. Wellman constructs a picture of La Mettrie rationally exploring the issues confronting the intelligent eighteenth-century medical man and creates a hypothetical account of how he came to enlightened but misunderstood conclusions. Actually, as far as knowing why La Mettrie said and did what he said and did, we have scarcely a clue.

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BRUCE T. MORAN (ed.), *Patronage and institutions: science, technology and medicine at the European court, 1500–1750*, Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 1991, pp. 262, illus., £35.00 (0–85115–285–6).

This collection of essays derives from the symposium on 'Science, technology, and medicine at the European court' held as part of the Eighteenth International Congress for the History of Science, at Munich in 1989. The eight papers delivered at the symposium have been supplemented with four others. The list of contributors is a roll call of some of the best younger scholars working in the field of Renaissance and early modern science and medicine, and the standard of scholarship is uniformly high. The strong themes of patronage and the effect of the institutional setting give unity to a collection which ranges from theories of impact to geography, from Paracelsianism to optics, from Denmark to Italy, and from Britain to Austria.

Not all the papers are directly relevant to the history of medicine, but because this is such an excellent collection it is worth briefly indicating the riches on offer. Paula Findlen opens the proceedings with an excellent survey of the ways in which the exchange of gifts of natural objects or written works served to disseminate information, forge intellectual links, establish reputations and authority, and to win patronage. William Eamon follows with a survey of some of the ways in which "scientific careers" were affected by their "institutional locus", whether in princely courts, academies or printing houses. W. R. Laird looks at the history of theories of impact before the development of the mechanical philosophy. He introduces the reader to a group of mathematicians and mechanics with occupational and professional interests in impact as a result of their relations with patrons and employers. Lesley B. Cormack describes a network of "geographically-minded" intellectuals (concerned with navigation, map-making, and colonization) associated with the court of Henry, Prince of Wales, in the early years of the seventeenth century. William B. Ashworth Jr shows how work in geometrical optics and mathematics was presented by a group of thinkers in a way calculated to flatter the Hapsburg monarchs. Ashworth draws particularly upon the evidence provided by engraved title-pages. The editor provides an overview of how the interests of German princes affected scientific activity in courts, universities and academies. This paper has much to interest the historian of medicine, dealing amongst other things with Paracelsianism and chemiatria. David Lux, in a thoughtful piece, points out that recent historical studies on early modern science have given rise to the need for a general reassessment of the institutional setting of science, medicine and technology. Alice Stroup shows how political theorists in the France of Louis XIV resisted the mercantilist policies of the government in which natural philosophy and technology played an increasingly important role. A. J. G. Cummings and Larry Stewart move into the eighteenth century with an examination of how the new philosophy was used by entrepreneurs to give legitimacy to their schemes.