

## Book Reviews

This valuable biography plus bibliography lists over a thousand individuals and numerous journals and institutions, the entries ranging from very brief to highly informative, and the whole supported by over two thousand bibliographical references. Problems of selection must have been great but the result achieved is wide in scope and rich in content. An outline of the author's interpretation of the history of phrenology serves as an introductory guide, and some themes are implicit in the selection of biographical material.

Phrenology, as a "philosophical" pursuit or as a popular "science", touched on so many fields of interest—from orthodox and heterodox medicine to radical politics and religion—that a wide range of scholars will find this volume an illuminating source of reference. And local historians, even if their more obscure phrenologists do not appear, are likely to be rewarded with entries shining unexpected light onto their concerns.

The focus of interest of modern scholars on phrenology during the first half of the nineteenth century is reflected, for example, in a contrast between the detailed itemization of communications to the *Phrenological Journal* (1823–47) and a much restricted selection of papers from phrenological periodicals late in the century. But its final decades, and even those of the early twentieth century, are not neglected. The "professors" and "pier phrenologists" are recorded, and some who "read heads" on Blackpool sands.

A book so full of interest invites browsing; but references to topics or to persons not listed alphabetically in the biographies can be traced through an efficient index. This allows easy access to entries recording the association of phrenologists with, say, Swedenborgianism, Methodism, socialism or geology, or identifying practitioners active in particular parts of the country. A select bibliography of modern writings about phrenology rounds off a volume replete with well presented information.

P. S. Brown, Bristol

R. M. MURRAY and T. H. TURNER (eds.), *Lectures on the history of psychiatry: the Squibb series*, London, Gaskell (an imprint of the Royal College of Psychiatrists), 1990, 8vo, pp. xi, 223, illus., £10.00 (paperback).

Six of the twelve Squibb lectures in this book have been published before. All but two of those in print for the second time were delivered by professional historians (as opposed to psychiatrists): the exceptions are Trevor Turner's, and Edward Hare's description of the disappearance of "insane ear" and other manifestations of asylum life (that were, and are, often attributed to bad management). The historians' reappearance in this context is welcome. Turner's Introduction says that they are staking an increasing number of claims in the territory that is the history of psychiatry; but in his own lecture, on the population of Ticehurst Asylum in the second half of the nineteenth century, he suggests that their interest might more properly be classified as the history of *madness*. The book will indeed interest historiographers, as well as historians, of psychiatry, taking as it does a slice that comprises 15 years' worth of invited lectures. Thus, Michael MacDonald in 1980 gave a very forthright explanation for broad swathes of eighteenth-century "madness" as latitudinarian Anglicanism's response to popular religion. Roy Porter delivered one of his most stylish exercises in the representation of a madman's story, which properly leaves the reader thoroughly confused as to the "boundaries between sanity and insanity" (1985); and Andrew Scull's is an equally entertaining, but infinitely more distressing, history of how people in New Jersey came to be ashamed of toothlessness in the 1920s (1986). These three historians are often called upon to represent a new historiography of madness, its construction, its voice, and its reception: not a coherent programme, and one that by no means subsumes these articles, or the historiographical patterns that do emerge in this collection as a whole.

W. F. Bynum's account of the rise of British neurology and German Berrios's of the construction of the "cognitive paradigm" for dementia are particularly notable for the breadth of their geographical and temporal comparisons, and for the immediacy of their implications for current practice. Alexander Walk lectured on Henry Maudsley, Patricia Allderidge on the

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recurring “innovations” in institutional reform, T. G. Davies on Ernest Jones (not quite the demolition job that the Introduction implies), and Virginia Berridge on the vicissitudes of the disease model of addiction. James Birley’s 1974 lecture, the first in the book, compares the work of psychiatrists and painters; Berrios’s entire essay (1988), the last, can be read as an amplification of Birley’s formulation that it all comes down to the business of “transforming the data . . . by a process of symbolic representation”.

What causes “madness”?—the governing élite’s nervousness about popular religious radicalism, or rotting teeth? For that matter, whence comes the history of psychiatry? Apparently, out of the divergence of consensus: but a divergence along class lines, between the professions of medicine and history, or simply over time? This book provides ammunition for adherents of all sorts of explanations.

Christine Stevenson, Wellcome Institute

TOBY A. APPEL, *The Cuvier–Geoffroy debate: French biology in the decades before Darwin*, Monographs on the History and Philosophy of Biology, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1987, 8vo, pp. 305, illus., £29.50.

Controversies hold a natural appeal for the historian of science. When the confrontation is between such “two great men” (p. 237) as Georges Cuvier and Étienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, and has wide-ranging ramifications, the attraction is well-nigh irresistible. This book is in most respects a model of how the task of extracting the full meaning as well as the full drama of such an historiographic opportunity should be attempted. The institutional setting of early nineteenth-century French science is lucidly sketched; and the previous careers of the protagonists and their gradual drift into conflict described. After an account of the debate before the Académie proper, the wider contemporary reaction is discussed. The final chapter considers later glosses upon the controversy, and tries to establish its significance in the history of nineteenth-century biology.

From this analysis the Cuvier–Geoffroy debate emerges as a multi-faceted conflict between various interests and ideas. It was both an argument about the control of scientific patronage and about the public role of scientific knowledge. It was, moreover, closely linked to contemporary political events as well as to cultural movements that extended far beyond the boundaries of France. Last, but not least, it was an esoteric technical debate; at issue were not merely the particular points in comparative anatomy that divided Geoffroy and Cuvier, but the whole question of the future goals and conceptual tools of the science.

What one misses in this study is any attempt to show how these various threads hang together. It may be convenient to treat the “internal” and “external” aspects of the debate separately; but to accept this distinction as more than provisional is to concede too much to Cuvier.

L. S. Jacyna, Wellcome Unit, Manchester

THOMAS D. BROCK, *Robert Koch: a life in medicine and bacteriology*, Berlin, Springer, 1988, 8vo, pp. ix, 364, illus., DM 48.00 (N. American distributor: Science Tech Publishers, Madison WI).

There was, until the publication of this volume, no English-language biography of Robert Koch. Brock’s account of the life and work of this important figure is thus very welcome. Full-length biographies of great medical scientists have been somewhat out of fashion recently, so it is perhaps worth reflecting on what we might now expect to learn from this genre. I would suggest the following: an account of the person’s work—the meritorious and the mundane; a discussion of their personality—public and private; an analysis of the context of their work—professional networks, institutions and wider social milieu; and an assessment and explanation of their work. In these days, when historians are interested in the “invention of