

the relationship between the seer and the seen, the values involved in generation, genealogy and kinship, and, above all, the role played by what Park calls a “gendered lens” in shaping the knowledge of the inner body, the empirical approach to observation and, finally, the origin of anatomical dissection.

A question arises, nonetheless, reading this remarkable book. In the otherwise coherent female narrative proposed by Park, why include the opening and embalming of the Popes’ bodies and the procedures of evisceration and “internal embalming” described in the fourteenth century by Guy de Chauliac, the personal physician of Clement VI? These practises, as well as those described in the nine cases carefully studied in the book, apparently confirm Park’s claim about the unproblematic opening of the human body in medieval and Renaissance Christian culture. How can we explain, then, the conflicting evidence of religious uncertainty associated with individual uneasiness, revulsion and disgust generated by the opening of the body, as it emerges, for example, in the *Anatomia* of Guido da Vigevano and in the *Anatomia Richardi* in the first half of the fourteenth century or, at the other end of Park’s chronology, in anatomical texts by Jacques Du Bois (Jacobus Sylvius) and Johannes Dryander (first half of the sixteenth century)? While these questions still remain to be thoroughly examined, *Secrets of women* opens up new perspectives and thinking in this engaging and multifaceted field of research.

Andrea Carlino,
University of Geneva

Ilana Zinguer and Isabelle Martin (eds),
Théâtre de l’anatomie et corps en spectacle. Fondements d’une science de la Renaissance, Bern and Oxford, Peter Lang, 2006, pp. x, 351, £40.20, €63.10, \$68.95 (paperback 978-3-03910-962-3).

If there is one subject in medical history that invites an interdisciplinary approach, it is anatomy. Since the second half of the nineteenth

century the humanities (in the form of art history) have occupied themselves with the history of anatomy, *casu quo* anatomical atlases. In the past two or three decades the interest in the history of anatomy from other domains of the humanities has grown considerably. Historians of literature, cultural historians, historians of the theatre, philosophers, linguists, cognitive scientists, all have turned their attention to the subject, often with interesting results.

This collection of essays, *Théâtre de l’anatomie et corps en spectacle*, is an example of such a wide array of disciplines occupying themselves with anatomy. This book contains the proceedings of a conference entitled *Les Théâtres de l’anatomie* organized at the University of Haifa by the Centre de Recherche de Civilisation Française in 2002.

The essays in the book are divided into two parts, roughly along chronological lines; the first part contains essays that mainly deal with subjects from the Renaissance and early modernity. The second part offers subjects from the eighteenth century until the recent past (the last essay is about Jean Genet’s 1950s play *Les Nègres*).

As one of the editors/contributors Ilana Zinguer announces in her ‘Introduction’ that the studies in this book are centred on two themes: anatomy as a science, and the relations between this science and literature. Not surprisingly, I think, this approach works best in the first part of the book. As Louis Van Delft points out in the first essay, ‘Du médical au littéraire’, Renaissance culture is characterized by far less division in narrow specialisms than our age of well-defined separate disciplines. In the Renaissance boundaries between different fields of learning were “supple” and “perméable”. Indeed the goals of anatomists and contemporary poets and writers seemed to overlap; both were searching for the essence of Man and for the identity of his soul.

In Van Delft’s essay the dissection of a subject by the sixteenth-century anatomist is presented as a working method taken over by writers and poets. It would have been interesting as well to learn more about any influence of writers and poets on the activities of anatomists. Especially concerning the theme of the theatre

as a place where anatomy but also plays were performed. The relations between anatomy and literature mentioned by Zinguer in her introduction now seem a bit one-sided: writers borrowing from anatomy and not vice versa. And then: what did writers and poets borrow from the science of anatomy? Michel de Montaigne's somewhat idiosyncratic use of the term "skeletons" (not so much a skeleton in the anatomical sense, as a skinned but living body dreamt up by the writer to allow insight into the workings of the human being) as described by Marie-Luce Demonet seems to suggest that writers were mainly interested in anatomy as a source for metaphors and emblems.

In some essays the subject "anatomy" seems to be stretched beyond its limits. The descriptions of physical ailments as a strategy to stress the seriousness of certain emotions in sixteenth-century ego documents may be a sign of an emerging sense of physicality, of the body, in the literature of that period (Nadine Tsur-Kuperty, 'Les mots du corps') but how closely does the use of these literary descriptions relate to the science of anatomy? Other essays use anatomy as an analogy: Gustave Flaubert came from a family of famous doctors, *Madame Bovary* is a book influenced by its author's medical connections, as is the clinical character of his observations, but does that make Flaubert an *anatomiste*, as Héléna Shillony would have it?

The wide spectrum of disciplines and topics brought together in this collection sometimes tends to obscure its central theme of the relation between anatomy and literature. That said, *Théâtre de l'anatomie et corps en spectacle* offers an interesting panorama on the way the anatomical method of looking at its subject pervaded and influenced (French) literary culture from the sixteenth century onwards. However, it would have been nice if the ways in which culture—literary and otherwise—pervaded and influenced the science and scientists of anatomy had also found a place in this book.

Tim Huisman,

Museum Boerhaave, National Museum for the
History of Science and Medicine, Leiden

Michael Sappol, *Dream anatomy: a unique blend of art and medical science from the National Library of Medicine*, Washington, United States Department of Health and Human Sciences, 2006, pp. xii, 180, illus., \$30.00 (paperback 978-0-16-072473-2).

More than the treasures of Tutankhamen's tomb, more even than the latest impressionist blockbuster, the most visited show on earth is the display of plastinated cadavers prepared by the German anatomist Gunther von Hagens. What attracts fee-paying visitors in their millions to stare at these spectacularly revealed human innards is the subject of Michael Sappol's marvellously compelling book, namely a renewed recognition of the fact that we all think of ourselves as "anatomical beings".

I confess I picked up this book without great enthusiasm. Having myself been responsible for a number of medical exhibitions that have showcased anatomical images, I was doubtful if yet another treatment of anatomy's aesthetic surface could add much to what Martin Kemp, Deanna Petherbridge and Andrea Carlino, amongst many others, have already shown us. Like these earlier studies, *Dream anatomy* takes us through a parade of the science's greatest hits. But there is nonetheless something distinctive and important about this visual essay, and it lies in Sappol's unblinking focus on the emotional potency—the undiluted joy—of "the anatomical imagination".

His thesis is unambiguous: having initially prompted the mutual enrichment of art and science, anatomical illustrations later became the terrain upon which they were "defined in opposition to each other". In Sappol's golden, pre-modern age, anatomical images provided humanity with a moral mirror and probe—a playful and dramatic canvas upon which cadavers teased viewers by delicately draping their own skin, cavorting with props, making dramatic poses and dancing as only the dead know how. Then, from the end of the seventeenth century, the pleasure of early anatomy came to be seen as a problem: "play and the pursuit of truth became incompatible". In order to turn it into a serious science of the real, the dreamy