

Book Reviews

was sexual strain caused by masturbation and by general sexual incontinence. Proper attention to this issue is lacking.

These two points notwithstanding, *Cultures of neurasthenia* is a great collection that deserves a wide readership and Gijswijt-Hofstra's introduction pulls the many themes together very well.

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John P Wright and Paul Potter (eds),
*Psyche and soma: physicians and
metaphysicians on the mind-body problem
from Antiquity to the Enlightenment*, Oxford,
Clarendon Press, 2000, pp. xii, 298, £45.00
(hardback 0-19-823840-1).

As the introduction to this book states: "Few subjects have stimulated a more intensive intellectual interchange than the nature of the human soul and its relationship to the body" (p. 3). All thirteen chapters are published here for the first time. The first four examine the developing conceptualization of the soul and its relationship to the body as perceived by the Greeks. Much here is familiar but well presented. In the Hippocratic Corpus, as Beate Gundert notes, "the psychic is interpreted in terms of the body, its structures, and its processes, or not at all" (p. 35). However, as Tom Robinson remarks, in Plato we have "the first fully articulated account of the relationship between soul (*psychê*) and body (*sôma*)" (p. 37). Robinson summarizes how Plato dealt with the problem of "relating a physical substance to its immaterial one, and to the end he openly admits his bafflement" (p. 55). That bafflement would echo down the ages. Philip van der Eijk examines Aristotle's handling of dualism,

concluding that Aristotle might have posited the concept of *nous* to avoid "the apparently mechanistic and deterministic implications of this bio-medical approach to the soul" (p. 75). Heinrich von Staden summarizes Hellenistic theories of the soul and body, stressing the revolutionary impact of the anatomical and physiological advances of Herophilus and Erasistratus on Stoicism as well as Galen's debt. Theo Heckel cogently presents how St Paul tried to convince Platonizing Corinthians that the body is not merely a passive receptacle for the soul. Gareth Matthews examines Augustine's use of "for the first time, an argument for dualism that is essentially internalist" (p. 134). Renaissance theories are discussed by Emily Michael, where the discussion shifted to the question of the soul's immortality (p. 156), and the elaboration and separation of the extended, corporeal soul and the incorporeal, immortal mind (pp. 164–5).

As Stephen Voss notes in chapter 8, whilst for Aristotelians the study of the soul was part of the "science of nature", Descartes' groundbreaking step was to exclude the soul from the scope of physical enquiry (p. 176). The remaining five chapters deal with this Cartesian legacy. Thomas Lennon discusses how Pierre Bayle recorded and annotated the debate among materialists, Cartesians, and Leibnizian monadology. François Duchesneau examines the animism of Georg Stahl and his polemic with Leibniz. John Wright discusses two types of dualism in eighteenth-century medicine: "substance dualism", which held that body and soul consisted of different and incompatible substances, and "function dualism", which assigned thought functions to the soul (mind) and life functions to the body. These two groups were closer than they maintained. Roselyne Rey looks at vitalism in the second half of the eighteenth century. Instead of examining the ontological status of the soul, vitalists stated that the essential property of living matter was *sensibility*

(p. 258). That this could take on the functions of the soul was recognized (and welcomed). François Azouvi examines the work of Pierre Cabanis. Drawing from his predecessors, Cabanis distinguished physical man from moral or interior man, whose nature resides in the brain. Since the brain acts upon the other organs, then the physical/moral relationship is essentially physical (p. 272). This new type of dualism led to the “physical/psychological dualism” of twentieth-century psychology (pp. 278–9). Although there are absent friends (Neoplatonism and Avicenna, for example), and Galen’s work and influence would have been better handled in a separate chapter, this book is a thoughtful introduction to the soul-body relationship and its continuing relevance.

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William G Naphy, *Plagues, poisons and potions: plague-spreading conspiracies in the western Alps c. 1530–1640*, Social and Cultural Values in Early Modern Europe, Manchester University Press, 2002, pp. xiii, 242, £55.00 (hardback 0-7190-4640-8), £16.99 (paperback 0-7190-4641-6).

Plagues, poisons and potions is a thorough-going description of the deliberations, legislation, and conspiracies in Geneva during plague time taken from two sources: criminal records, which begin in 1390, and the minutes of the city council, which begin in 1409. Naphy’s analysis stretches from the earliest references to plague in these sources (1459) to the plague’s final assault in 1640. He argues persuasively against common assumptions that conspiracies to spread plague in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were coupled with and dependent on witchcraft either in the

minds of the accused or the prosecuting bodies. Except for the plague of 1571, where witchcraft became a principal crime, charges of sorcery were altogether missing from the criminal investigations of both earlier and later plagues in Geneva. Instead of depending on the supernatural as with witchcraft prosecutions, the trials of those accused of spreading plague relied on accusations that pinpointed a small and interrelated community of health professionals, principally those who cleaned and cleared the houses of the plague dead, and on physical evidence—boxes of grease concocted from recipes that mixed pus from the buboes of the plague stricken that was allegedly smeared on doors to spread plague. Further, the motivation interpreted by the courts for such atrocities was not the work of Satan or dependent on other supernatural phenomena but instead turned on the mundane—personal profit.

Indeed, Naphy sides with the prosecution, seeing these trials less as figments of the imagination of a war-wearied, plague-battered, religiously intolerant, and paranoid ruling class and more as actual cases of human greed, acts of ambition or survival. First, Naphy argues that consistently, through the sixteenth century, the magistrates rebuked initial accusations of plague spreading and made charges of plague conspiracy only after a large volume of testimony and other circumstantial evidence had been accumulated. Secondly, he claims that torture was not a device to drive such accusations from the mouths of the innocent; rather, it was applied as a last resort, in fact, after a court in the English common law tradition would have already convicted the accused. Thirdly, he shows that those charged with spreading the plague came almost exclusively from the health services, whose employment depended on the plague’s perpetuation. Plague not only afforded them their employment, it gave them free range