

Thus, Dibattista manages better in his analysis of how much Charcot's work was a determinant in the formation of a neurological taxonomy. The act of denomination—the creation of a concept—is the first and definitive operation of a science. Therefore, the study of the appearance and transformation of fundamental terms of a science is a major moment in its evolution. Without doubt, a history of medical ideas is the most fruitful approach for a historian trained firstly as a medical doctor. Dibattista astutely chose to privilege this stance rather than a biographical or sociological one, though all these approaches are used to some extent in this work.

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John M S Pearce, *Fragments of neurological history*, London, Imperial College Press, 2003, pp. xvii, 633, illus., £46.00 (hardback 1-86094-338-1).

Neurologists, neurosurgeons and neuroscientists rank high by numbers among medical historians. They have not lacked quality either. Harvey Cushing's biography of Osler is a great book and JF Fulton's omnivorous historical studies pay revisiting. The neurologically inclined have obviously been at the forefront of chronicling the investigation of the nervous system and its disorders. In this respect they have often favoured anthologies and Edwin Clarke (a former neurologist) and Charles O'Malley's *The human brain and spinal cord* (1968) is a milestone for such enquiries. John M S Pearce has travelled Clarke and O'Malley's route although he (or his publisher) has not learned as much as might be gleaned from such a meticulous example.

Pearce served on the editorial board of the *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery and Psychiatry*, which had a "space-fillers" device to pack incomplete columns. This work is an extension of those "idiosyncratic" entries (p. xiii). The volume has 135 sections in which lengthy extracts from neurological texts are woven into a positivist text (positivist as in the sense of being concerned with identifying the

true discoverer of such and such a fact—insulin for example, p. 510). For the historically unaware but hungry neurologist the readings from Hippocrates, Vesalius and Hughlings Jackson may catch the imagination. For the student of the obscure, the book's merits are its introduction to the background of a cornucopia of neurological arcana including heterochromia iridis or Hoffmann and Tinel's sign of formication (good opportunity here for the mischievous typesetter). From the connoisseur of referencing and the footnote this book is best kept hidden. The punctiliousness associated with neurologists cannot be found in titles which, for example, are sometimes italicized sometimes not, sometime capitalized sometimes not. At times the referencing system has the challenge of a crossword. For those who consider immaculate footnoting to be the bibliographical equivalent of a neurological sign, beware what the text might hold. The publisher has a long way to go to live up to the name of the distinguished college in whose name this book is printed.

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Nicholas L Tilney, *Transplant: from myth to reality*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2003, pp. xii, 320, illus., £19.95 (hardback 0-300-09963-0).

The transplantation of organs came close to being one of medicine's cruellest and most spectacular failures. Throughout the ten "Black Years" that followed the first and famed transplant between the Herrick twins in 1954 at Boston's Brigham Hospital, there was no realistic prospect of extending its scope beyond the genetically identical by deceiving the recipient's immune system into accepting the transplanted organ. Indeed during this period the average survival of several hundred experimentally transplanted dogs was a mere eighteen days—so it beggars belief that anyone should have even contemplated the procedure in humans. But they did, and the patient died. The