

Book Reviews

DANIEL N. ROBINSON, *Aristotle's psychology*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1989, 8vo, pp. xi, 144, \$28.00.

This book, by a historian of psychology, covers not only topics dealt with by Aristotle in his treatise *On the soul*, but his whole treatment of the nature of human beings. There is a clear attempt to cover the subject comprehensively (including, for example, what Aristotle says about women and slaves), suggesting that the book is chiefly intended for non-specialists interested in the comparison of Aristotle's thought on human nature with that of more recent theorists. Robinson's interpretations are helpful here not only in connection with the explanations of sensation and action in Aristotle's psychological works, but also concerning questions of character development and socialization in the *Ethics* and *Politics*.

The first two chapters survey relevant areas of earlier Greek thought. Contrasts between Plato and Aristotle form a recurrent theme in the book, which concludes with discussion of the tension between the theoretical and practical lives in *Nicomachean Ethics* 10 and its implication for Aristotle's view of the nature of human beings.

The treatment of some topics is inevitably compressed. Page 63 links the active as opposed to the passive intellect of *De anima* 3.5 with scientific knowledge of universals as opposed to knowledge based on perception, which is at least a questionable interpretation of a notoriously difficult chapter, and promises further discussion in ch. 7, but there is no explicit reference there to the distinction of *De anima* 3.5. The citation at p.33 n.6 of *Posterior Analytics* 75a30–5 as saying that we cannot really explain what happens *usually*, but not *always*, is accurate in itself but needs to be modified in the light of *Metaphysics* E 2 1037a20. Anaxagoras is misrepresented as having taught that all reality was *reason*, coupling him with Parmenides against the materialists (p. 47).

There are also minor irritations such as the citation of passages from Hesiod's extant *Works and Days* with "Fragment" numbers, and errors like "Euripedes" (twice on p. 9), "the faculty of *praktikos*" (p. 81), and *telo*i as the plural of *telos* (p. 99). "Rejuvenated" is mis-spelled twice on p. 18, and there are other printing errors ("caressing" mis-spelled on p. 124, for example).

There is some interesting material in this book; more of the occasional blemishes should have been ironed out by a publisher's reader.

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ANTON J. L. VAN HOOFF, *From autothanasia to suicide: self-killing in classical antiquity*, London and New York, Routledge, 1990, pp. xv, 306, £35.00 (0-415-04055-8).

All you ever wanted to know about ancient suicide—and a good deal more—can be found here. Ravished virgins, defeated generals, heroic slaves, and aged invalids cluster in a catalogue of 960 cases involving 9,639 individuals. This mathematical precision at times comes close to self-parody, and the carefully constructed charts of the frequency of suicide, despite Dr van Hooff's advocacy, do not, to my mind, prove more than the fact that we have far more information about the late Roman Republic and early Empire than about Hellenistic Greece or the third century AD. One can here learn about a whole variety of possible methods of doing away with oneself (opening the veins was not as common as Seneca's example might lead us to believe), and the words one might choose to describe such an act (but not "suicidium", a neologism of the seventeenth century). For those who prefer visual to literary descriptions of suicide, there is a small selection of paintings of famous suicides, including Dido, Decebalus, and Seneca.

To this exhaustive catalogue of the hows, whys, and wherefores of human self-destruction, I append one comment and three quibbles. As Dr van Hoof remarks, suicide figures little in the surviving medical literature from antiquity. Galen's discussion of the Hippocratic *Aphorism* 2.43, which deals with suicide (and attempted suicide) by hanging, gives no example from his

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own experience, and his substantial account, at the end of his commentary on *Epidemics VI*, of the relationship between mental states and illness does not mention self-inflicted death. His acquaintances worry themselves to death at the loss of a friend, a relative, or even imperial favour. Their shame or irrational fear leads to illness, not to self-murder. This gap can hardly be put down, as is suggested on p. 158, to an imperfectly developed Greek psychiatry, cf. e.g., P. Manuli and M. Vegetti, *Le opere psicologiche di Galeno* (1988), and may simply be due to the hazards of transmission.

Three quibbles: the numbering of the notes on p. 36 goes awry; p. 46, Erasistratus' part in the love story of Antiochus is very far from certain; and, p. 146, when John Donne wrote *Biathanatos*, he was recent convert from Roman Catholicism, not the reverse.

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ARION ROȘU, *Gustave Liétard et Palmyr Cordier: Travaux sur l'histoire de la médecine indienne. Un demi-siècle de recherches āyurvédiques*, Paris, Collège de France, Institut de Civilisation Indienne, 1989, 8vo, pp. cxxi, 615, Ffr. 500 (paperback).

In this thick volume, Roșu presents an extraordinarily rich feast of history, historiography, biography, and anecdote. The material focuses the lives and writings of two French scholars who laid the foundations of the history of Indian medicine, Gustave Liétard and Palmyr Cordier. But Roșu's treatment goes far beyond any narrow assessment of their lives and works, and presents nothing less than a compressed and densely documented history of Āyurveda and its study in Europe.

Liétard (1833–1904) practised hydropathic medicine at Plombières-les-Bains, in Lorraine, and Cordier (1871–1914) was a medical doctor who practised in the French colonies in Chandernagore, Pondicherry, and Indochina. As their correspondence shows, they worked closely as scholars and as Liétard first met Cordier shortly after the death of his own son, who was of Cordier's generation, there was an almost familial relationship between them. In this volume, Roșu surveys their lives and writings, and the intellectual milieu from which their work flowed, in a weighty 121-page introduction, and then reproduces a dozen of Liétard's most important articles and short books, and fourteen of Cordier's. Of outstanding value is the excellent index to the whole, which allows one to follow subjects that both authors returned to in several papers. Many of the papers are of much more than historical interest. Cordier's reports on the history of Sanskrit medical literature and his searches for Sanskrit medical manuscripts, for example, are of importance even today, since several of the works he discovered remain unpublished and unstudied.

The idea for this volume arose in 1984 when Roșu discovered the Wellcome Institute's collection of Liétard's papers, letters, and offprints and realized its great value. (This collection was described by Nigel Allan, in vol. 25 of this journal (1981), pp. 85–88. The volume under review reports on the collection in greater detail, and reproduces several items in facsimile.) Subsequently, Roșu discovered that the Āyurvedic material donated to the Société Asiatique by Jean Filliozat (1906–1982) included a large portion of the library of Cordier, which Filliozat had acquired some time before 1940. Roșu draws attention to the continuity of the work of Jean Filliozat with that of Liétard and Cordier, a continuity that is often demonstrated graphically since Filliozat added his own layer of marginal annotation to the many profusely annotated books from Cordier's library.

Reading this collection, it is striking to realize just how many of the accepted facts of Indian medical history we owe to these two scholars: that Vāgbhaṭa was a Buddhist; the parallels between the Hippocratic Oath and that of Caraka; the importance of the Sanskrit medical texts for the recovery of early Indian philosophy; the parallels between Greek and Indian humoral ideas; the medical traditions recoverable from Pāli texts; the transmission of Indian medicine to Tibet; and much else besides.

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