

Anna Bellettini takes on a monographic approach to a (supposedly) early medieval text, the *Carmen Medicinale* originally published in the *Patrologia latina* but reproduced by De Renzi in the *Collectio*. While contributing new data to the study of this poem – a manuscript version significantly older than those hitherto considered – she asks important questions of its composition, relations with other texts and authorial intentions, recognising that the difficulties to trace its textual history involve problems that go far beyond establishing its writing date. Florence Eliza Glaze also focuses on a single text, planned to be included in the sixth volume of the *Collectio* that never saw the light: Gariopontu's *Passionarius*. She gives a detailed account of the earliest manuscript cultures that produced, reproduced and commented upon the text. Such codicological and paleographical analysis, interpreted in conjunction with precise historical connections with the Salernitan world, enable her not only to shed new light on the composition of the text itself but, most notably, to assess changes in the ways the text was used that would have otherwise remained unnoticed. Instead of revisiting one particular text, the focus of Mireille Ausécache is one Salernitan master whose core biography and two of his works were included in Salvatore De Renzi's *Collectio*: Magister Salernus, an acknowledged author and teacher by later generations of physicians. Ausécache reconsiders his biography and his work as a medical author in light of new information that she and others have unearthed since De Renzi's publishing efforts, providing manuscript evidence that opens up the possibility to ascribe three new texts to him.

Although devoted to a single Salernitan text that De Renzi transcribed in his *Collectio*, the last contribution by Alejandro García González aims to study it as an instance of a genre of texts. Like other medieval scientific and medical glossaries, the *Alphita* glossary belongs to an open textual tradition where texts were unstable by their very nature. This feature must be acknowledged and faced not only as a way to understand better the texts themselves but also because it poses particular problems to the scholar attempting to produce a critical edition. These reflections are important since they make us aware of the limits of the interpretative stance taken by editorial practices that try to fix texts that were conceived as modifiable and open to additions.

This learned, multi-lingual volume ends with useful indexes of names and manuscripts that will help readers to use the scholarly richness it contains.

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C.F. Goodey, *A History of Intelligence and 'Intellectual Disability': The Shaping of Psychology in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), pp. vii, 381, £35.00, hardback, ISBN: 978-1-4094-2021-7.

In this timely, daring and challenging book Goodey traces the history of ideas surrounding intellectual disability. He takes the story, generated by the inherited philosophical and theological baggage of the ancient Greeks, via medieval scholastics, up to John Locke, who emerges as something of a pivotal character in Goodey's narrative, and the emergence of an Enlightenment concept of man, which was based on 'excluding *a priori* from that

concept certain “men” (p. 346). Thus with ‘the positive establishment of the human mind as a natural and quasi-secular realm of its own came intellectual disability as its generalised negative. [L]ocke’s out-group, conceived out of a particular political conjuncture, has been taken by modern psychology to be a self-evident fact of nature’ (p. 346). It is with this central claim that Goodey concludes his book.

In the intervening 300-odd pages copious evidence is assembled for the main argument, which, in a nutshell, proposes that intelligence is a construct stemming from a subculture of professionals seeking to distance themselves from ordinary people, to establish an out-group in the ethnographic sense, and that, following Karl Popper, the modern human sciences have failed to emerge from their roots in late-medieval scholasticism and methods of social administration. Among the significant propositions, which Goodey leaves to future researchers to put to the test, is that the association between disability and permanence, in medical accounts of ‘idiocy’, only had the vital ingredient of incurability added as late as the end of the nineteenth century. Goodey posits that pre-Lockean thinkers believed that whatever part of one’s physical or cognitive structure failed to operate ‘properly’ in this world was immaterial and inconsequential vis-à-vis the theologically propounded perfection in the next world. Thus, at a level of personhood and identity, the ‘modern disabled person’ in the sense of someone whose physical or cognitive deviations determine ‘personality over a lifetime, is not only absent from medieval thought but inconceivable, moreover *morally* inconceivable’ (p. 338).

Another message one may take away from the central chapters of this book is that Protestantism apparently contributed to a development that by the twenty-first century had led to intellectual ‘ableism’. Under the old Catholic medieval system, most people were expected to be dutifully guided and to be obedient to their religious as well as secular superiors, so that one’s own initiative and effort in one’s conduct and ultimately one’s salvation were secondary compared to doing as one was told. After the Reformation everything became individualised: you, and only you, are personally responsible for your place on this earth, your conduct and your salvation. Calvinism above all ‘discovered in the catechism a substitute for the Catholic mass as the way of identifying value within the individual, and of enhancing that value with intellectual means’ (p. 178). The rise of Protestantism (in particular Calvinism) has already had the rise of capitalism ascribed to it, famously by Max Weber and subsequently in Richard Tawney’s seminal *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, and now we can blame Protestantism for the development and deepening of concepts of intellectual dis/ability, too. Henceforth, the ‘simple’, ignorant or ‘underdeveloped’ could be beaten with yet another stick in the armoury of discriminatory weapons at society’s disposal. Furthermore, a belief in concepts of growth, both at a personal developmental level and an economic one, coupled with the emerging notion of meritocracy taking precedence over right of birth, laid ever greater emphasis in society on the individual and individual responsibility for one’s path in life. To achieve progress, growth and continual self-improvement became the positivist and progressivist dictats that are with us to this day. Extending Goodey’s arguments one is led to believe that in a liberal society like our own, where everyone has the meritocratic right (or duty) to achieve their full potential, the scientific/expert assessment of what the limits of one’s personal potential might be takes on greater meaning than for a pre-modern society, where the vast majority of the population (such as peasants or labourers) were never expected to fulfil any but the most basic personal potentials.

One of the highlights of this book lies in the interesting discussion of the figure known as the changeling (pp. 260–79), the ‘wrong’ or disabled child, believed to have been substituted for the ‘real’ or ideal child. Goodey draws illuminating parallels between the medical and psychological description of modern coping strategy, where parents are informed by the experts that their child is disabled and when those experts expect parents to go through a ritualised hierarchy of reactions, and the pre-modern version of such a ‘desanctification ritual’, in which supernatural agents such as devils, witches or fairies were blamed on causing the ‘wrong’ child.

If there is one major criticism it is that Goodey’s narrative is extremely sparse on chronology, so that few dates are mentioned in association with the authorities cited, especially for medieval writers like Avicenna (c. 980–1037), Averroes (1126–98) or Albert[us Magnus] (c. 1200–80); placing the key players in time would allow the reader to form a more comprehensive overall picture of normative developments as a process. The book is also not helped by the somewhat confusing structure of Goodey’s narrative. For instance, the very important point that Aristotle’s (in)famous statement ‘man is a rational animal’ did *not* stem from Aristotle himself in this format is spread out over two separate chunks of text (pp. 34 and 284 respectively), with a crucial part of the information – that it was actually transmitted to posterity centuries after Aristotle via a paraphrase by the third-century Neoplatonist Porphyry – only given at the later stage, thereby diminishing the main argument already presented some 250 pages earlier.

Overall this is a phenomenally ambitious, interesting and reflective interdisciplinary history of ideas. It may, after a fashion, make uncomfortable reading for those of a hardcore scientific persuasion, but for the humanist it assembles some convincing evidence for the processes by which changing sets of ideas, or an accident of historical contingencies, have come to shape allegedly incontrovertible universal truths. At the risk of turning a tautological phrase, this is a highly intellectual history of intellectual disability.

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Daniel Defoe. (David Landa and Louis Roberts (eds)) *A Journal of the Plague Year*, Revised edition, Oxford World Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 320, \$9.95, paperback, ISBN: 978-0199572830.

‘Oh! Death, Death, Death!’ screams a woman from the window of a house near Cornhill. No neighbours stir and the street is deserted save for the book’s narrator. What does he do? Noting a chill in his blood, the man then simply continues his journey through the City of London streets. This book is a fascinating record of trying to cope during the capital’s last plague epidemic of 1665.

Daniel Defoe was only around 5 years old during the Great Plague which claimed nearly 100 000 lives. This makes *A Journal of the Plague Year*, originally published in 1722, an imaginative reconstruction. Its shadowy narrator, known only as ‘H.F.’, seeks to record the terrifying progress of a disease that had no known cause and therefore no known cure. Defoe uses his skills as a journalist, novelist and Londoner to knit together evidence with