

### Book Reviews

protections', where Mme Loux is especially illuminating on the traditional "sagesse du corps" of peasant society – though, as she emphasizes, the crucial divide in France was not so much between "popular" and "scientific" medicine, but between the "underground" and the "official". That is to say, élite medical practice was characterized more by its formal sanctions, than by any unique truth or efficacy it possessed. Here, as elsewhere, Mme Loux's own exhaustive researches into French proverbs about the body provide a bridge between intellectual analysis and personal experience: "Où est le corps, là est la mort"; "Trois fléaux se disputeront toujours la terre: la peste, la famine, et la guerre".

Finally, this book offers interesting food for cross-cultural thought. One is struck by how frequently traditional French representations of the body are suffused with the iconography of Catholicism. One suspects that an equivalent book about the English experience would be more secular in its orientations. And it is also noteworthy how often traditional French images of sickness and health survive in modern forms – in twentieth-century patent medicine advertisements for example. Is this specifically because of the survival of the French peasantry into the contemporary world? Or does it point to a quasi-Jungian conclusion about the archetypal nature of our symbols?

IAN MACLEAN, *The Renaissance notion of woman: A study in the fortunes of scholasticism and medical science in European intellectual life*, Cambridge University Press, 1980, 8vo, pp. viii, 199, £7.50.

*Reviewed by D. P. Walker, M.A., D. Phil., F.B.A., Professor of the History of the Classical Tradition, University of London, The Warburg Institute, Woburn Square, London WC1H 0AB.*

This is a very orderly and succinct book, which contains a great deal of erudition in a small space. But the virtues of tidiness and brevity are, I think, carried to excess. The numbering of paragraphs in the manner of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* is not suited to historical writing and forces the author's thought into an over-rigid framework, with the result that important facts and aspects of his subject are either omitted or relegated to footnotes. The extreme brevity reinforces this result and also prevents frequent and extensive quotation, although there is an appendix (but of only three pages) of extracts from original sources. Thus we know most of the writers cited only through the barest, driest summary of their views. In some cases, such summaries can be extremely misleading: for example, the presentation of Guillaume's *Les très-merveilleuses victoires des femmes du nouveau monde* as a feminist tract, without any hint that this work announces the advent of a female Messiah, or the discussion of Platonic love without any mention of homosexuality.

With regard to Renaissance medicine, it seems to me extraordinary that the question of female orgasm should be treated only in a footnote. The widespread Galenic view that women emitted semen, by which was meant, not ova, but vaginal fluid, and that this was necessary to procreation, entailed the conclusion that no woman could produce a child without having experienced sexual pleasure during its conception. In Fernel's *Medicina*, which remained a standard textbook into the seventeenth century, we read of certain frigid little women (*mulierculae*) who claimed to have conceived without orgasm (*sine voluptate*); but the wise doctor knew better than to believe such prudish nonsense. This belief must have been of the utmost importance in married life, and certainly deserves fuller treatment than one footnote.

### Book Reviews

Another example of the inadequate, indeed mistaken, discussion of a partly medical question of practical importance is that of witchcraft. The belief that most witches were women who suffered from melancholic delusions is central to Johann Wier's extremely influential *De praestigiis daemonum*, and Jean Bodin's refutation of it hinges on the denial that women are prone to melancholy. All this is omitted with the remark: "Except in technical treatises on witchcraft, it is rare to find mention of sorcery in connection with woman"; but where else would one look for such a mention?

In spite of the above shortcomings, this book does provide a useful collection of testimonies to its main, true but not new, thesis: that the traditional view of woman as inferior to man in nearly every respect survived, with very few dissenting voices, until the early seventeenth century.

FRANK J. SULLOWAY, *Freud: biologist of the mind*, London, Burnett Books, 1979, 8vo, pp. xxvi, 612, illus., £11.95.

*Reviewed by Roy Porter, Ph.D., Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BP.*

Dr. Sulloway has set out to divest the historiography of Freudian psycho-analysis of its myths (hence his subtitle: *Beyond the psychoanalytic legend*). The principal one is of Freud as the heroic, isolated genius who single-handedly created the new science of the "talking cure". In refutation of this Dr. Sulloway demonstrates the key role, in the evolution of psycho-analysis and in the development of Freud's own thought, played by figures such as Breuer and Fliess. Fliess in particular is shown to have had theories about the inherent nature of infantile sexuality far in advance of Freud's own conception that early sexual arousal was a consequence of actual seduction by adults; theories which Freud himself, with deep embarrassment about his own errors, eventually took over. Another myth is the widespread claim that Freud created "pure psychology" as an autonomous science, largely as a product of his own self-analysis. By contrast Dr. Sulloway convincingly shows in great detail how Freudian psycho-analysis originated in, and continued to be sustained by, the matrix of late nineteenth-century biology: the bio-energetics of Fliess, Haeckel's emphasis on the parallelism of ontogeny and phylogeny, Darwin's studies of instinct in animals and man, neo-Lamarckian concerns with the inheritance of adaptive features, and so forth. Psycho-analysis was not born as an independent science when its prophet looked into his own soul. Rather, with its roots in neurology, sexology, and evolution, psycho-analysis was a "biology of the mind".

Dr. Sulloway traces the origins of these myths (and twenty-four others listed on pp. 489-495) to Freud's own autobiographical writings and to the hero-worshipping legend creation of his disciples. He demolishes them with massive erudition, sound judgment, and meticulous scholarship (though the book does have its errors: e.g. Karl Abraham was not an embryologist). One wishes sometimes that the iconoclasm were more constructive, and that Dr. Sulloway had been more interested in the positive uses of these myths. Nevertheless, this book will undoubtedly become – and deservedly – the major source for Freud's intellectual life (particularly up to about 1900).

Dr. Sulloway writes in his Preface that he hopes his work will prove a "watershed" in Freud studies (having dismissed the myth of Freud as hero, he is doubtless aware of his partridic tendency to set himself up as one). This is unlikely. For one thing, his