

provide a context for this diagnosis by reference to Michael MacDonald's study of the Mary Glover case, and by a brisk tour through recent work on modern hysteria. In view of the intensely culture-bound nature of such phenomena, it is not clear that most of this is directly relevant, although it is suggestive. Further discussion of the flexible boundary between natural illness and demonic phenomena would have been more helpful. The authors quote in full Browne's later suggestion that many possession cases were misdiagnosed as bewitchment, without apparently understanding its significance. As with Hale, comments on Browne's personality are provided instead of close examination of his opinions. Andrew Cunningham's recent essay on Thomas Browne should be consulted for a clearer view of his religious and philosophical beliefs, which were markedly different from those of Hale.

Geis and Bunn have read widely but not well in the secondary literature, which they quote at excessive length. Hoary antiquarian studies are cited as if they were of equal weight with more recent scholarly work. In the discussions of medicine, this leads to curious value judgements about the ignorance and incompetence of early modern physicians, whom the authors believe to have been consulted only by the rich and only in grave cases. They also believe it was necessary to incorporate foreign degrees, which was only technically the case. Moreover, since they cannot identify even famous graduate practitioners such as William Petty and John Pordage, it is difficult to know what to make of their failure to locate the Dr Feavour mentioned in the trial, whom they suggest might actually be Browne. He was perhaps a licensed physician in a neighbouring town or village, but they show no sign of having investigated episcopal licensing and visitation records in search of him.

By comparison with European cases, it is unusual for an individual English witchcraft case to offer scope for detailed analysis. This study is the fullest of its kind. It is therefore unfortunate that it is characterized by antiquarian digressions rather than analytical

direction. Nevertheless, the authors have discovered a great deal that would have escaped other historians. This is a useful book that will long be necessary reading for historians of witchcraft.

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Robert A Erickson, *The language of the heart, 1600–1750*, New Cultural Studies, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997, pp. xxi, 273, £34.95 (0-8122-3394-8).

We live in an age so culturally preoccupied with incorporations of the human body into cognitive structures that even the parts of the anatomical body have been turned into developed empires of meaning: tongue, belly, foot, sex organs. Such close scrutiny and analysis are not new: think no further than the foot for Freud and the fetishists, or the Jewish hook nose in the cultural history of semitism. The new dimension entails the temples of historical learning our generation erects: whole edifices of thought dedicated to the organs of gross anatomy. Freud knew that the foot was more significant than (say) the arm or the knee, but he could not have compiled the kind of metaphoric history of the foot that Erickson provides here for the heart.

It is not merely the *anatomical* heart that engages Erickson but its symbolisms and vocabularies as the seat of love. How did history configure this development? Why not the lungs or bowels or rectum or even Freud's famously erotic feet? And why not the uterus or penis? What is it about the *heart* that configured it as the superlative source of love's devotees: Cupid and Eros, reproduction, passion, tenderness? Erickson's conclusion is that the early modern history of the heart is fundamentally a linguistic heritage associating it with writing and thought: cognitive accretions and transformations grounded in desire. This constellation (language, writing, thought) forms the most interesting part of this book.

The "language of the heart" denoting the realms of emotion and sincerity had been a

major concern of *all literary*, as distinct from didactic, writers in the early modern period. Even the Bible elevated it. The early British novel, for example, was fundamentally formed around its empire, and what used to be crudely labelled pre-Romantic poetry, and is now more properly called the poetry of lyric and fragment, self-consciously cultivated it. Erickson's tack is his calibration of this pursuit to the historical-anatomical heart dissected and illustrated by the Renaissance anatomists and physiologists and transformed in the work of William Harvey, discoverer of the circulation of the blood in *De motu cordis* (1628).

The phrase itself ("the language of the heart") was old by the time early Georgian poet Alexander Pope invoked it in his famous autobiographical poem, *An epistle to Dr Arbuthnot* (1734). Erickson uses Pope's passage as his epigraph, making it the salient point about the heart as seat of feeling, sincerity, and love. The literary heritage from Shakespeare and Milton forward had also inscribed the heart as the organ of appeal. To it were ultimate demands made, whether in the name of romantic love itself, of human nature and its decline, or life and death. The issue is not *why metaphor* (all thought is necessarily encoded in language which is itself inescapably metaphoric in degrees), but why this specific organ? This remains Erickson's big question. He is brave enough to ask it and in so doing provides an excellent mini-history of the heart from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century.

The heart's symmetrical centre in the human midriff may be, as Erickson suggests, its most

important sign. Compare it with the symbolism of the (one) penis and (two) breasts. In contrast, one heart rather than two or three hearts despite its bipartite structure. The point is not merely symmetry and gender symbolism (female and male hearts) but dignity and gravamen. That is, the metaphoric sway of the heart as ultimate arbiter: the sense in all these early uses and literary authors that no other organ could compete with the heart's naked power. It did not matter whether Galenic, Harveian or mechanistic. What counted were the terrific accumulations of meaning that had attached to the heart by the eighteenth century as to no other part of the body.

The quandary, however, is not the heart's variety of symbolisms (the thinking heart, the auricular heart, the phallic heart, the ejaculatory heart, etc.) but the heart as metonymy for the microcosm of the body itself. In this sense, the anatomical heart may have given rise to *fewer* metaphors than other parts of the body: tongue, phallus, feet.

Erickson's approach lays much weight on Harvey's historical momentum in the seventeenth century and in new metaphors Harvey's language of circulation nourished in subsequent authors, especially John Milton, Aphra Behn, and Samuel Richardson. Anyone now want to write the Oxford Heart's Companion? The brain and its narratives, with Thomas Willis rather than William Harvey cast as hero? A suitable epigraph waits seizure.

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