

## Book Reviews

effective prevention campaigns. This is the “lesson of history” used to argue for a liberal policy approach.

The book is not a work of original scholarship. Clark is bringing together a body of historical and current writing about AIDS and epidemic disease, much of which is familiar. Despite his historical analysis of widely different cultures, his focus in the present is almost entirely on the United States and the impact of AIDS in that particular culture. Even within the U.S., he takes no account of more recent disease formulations, such as the “chronic disease” model, which has been widely discussed. AIDS, whether rightly or wrongly, is no longer seen within the epidemic model; it would have been helpful to have some consideration of those more recent changes. Outside the U.S., too, AIDS has been a much less powerful force for the reform of health care systems. In the U.K., for example, AIDS funding has been the victim of recent health service changes rather than a driving force for change.

The book is therefore of limited relevance to a non-American audience, although it is well produced and illustrated by thirteen full colour plates, ranging from a 1350 representation of Saint Sebastian to the AIDS quilt in the 1990s.

**Virginia Berridge**, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

**Kurt Danziger**, *Constructing the subject: historical origins of psychological research*, Cambridge Studies in the History of Psychology, Cambridge University Press, 1994 (hardback edition first published 1990), £12.95, \$16.95 (paperback 0-521-46785-3).

It is with great pleasure that we can welcome the publication in paperback of Kurt Danziger’s *Constructing the subject*. Even now, Danziger’s work remains a lively, engaging and completely *au courant* investigation into the nature and development of psychology as a scientific endeavour. Not a disciplinary history *per se*, *Constructing the*

*subject* is rather an exploration of the ways in which the subject in psychology has been historically constructed and reconstructed, approached through a series of key episodes and figures. Particularly attentive to the intellectual history of psychology in Germany and America, and deft in its deployment of the most recent analytical developments within science studies, Danziger’s work illuminates an issue of profound concern to all those interested in the human and medical sciences: what are the consequences of transforming human beings into objects of scientific inquiry?

Danziger’s analysis explores this question from two angles. First, following recent trends in history and sociology of science, Danziger argues that in any scientific investigation, choice of experimental method employed, research object investigated, and result obtained are all intimately linked. Thus the nature of the object at the centre of scientific inquiry will depend, at least in part, on the style of investigation adopted, and vice-versa. In terms of psychology, Danziger identifies three types of experimental investigation as dominant: a Wundtian style of expert-performed experimental introspection, a French style of clinical-experimental investigation of individual subjects, and a Galtonian style of large-scale statistical analysis. Each, Danziger claims, was organized around a particular set of research questions, used distinctive methods of data production and analysis, and created a specific type of experimental subject.

Second, Danziger insists that this generic interrelation of the elements constituting the experimental endeavour becomes more complicated when human beings are transformed into research subjects, because of their responsiveness to the social settings in which they are placed and the behavioural expectations they bring to those situations. Thus, according to Danziger, analysis of the experiment as a distinct social realm is, within psychology, particularly important. Changes in environment, in personnel, or in definition of social role can all radically alter how a human subject will respond under any given circumstance. In addition Danziger points out that there exists no *prima facie* assurance that knowledge produced within

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the particular social configuration of the psychological experiment will apply beyond its boundaries. Partially for these reasons, the generation of stable knowledge claims with broad-scale implications, Danziger suggests, has proven extraordinarily problematic for psychology as a discipline.

In addition to historicizing and contextualizing the notion of the subject, two other features of *Constructing the subject* will be of particular interest to medical historians. Danziger's characterization of the French clinical-pathological style of investigation, while cursory, raises important questions about the relations between clinical subjects and examining scientist-experts, and about the kinds of knowledge that can result from such interactions. Similarly, Danziger's more extensive discussion of the development of the treatment group, and the problems of extending knowledge claims founded on experimentally defined groups to "real" populations, are germane to both current epidemiological practices and the clinical and experimental trials at the heart of most contemporary medical research.

*Constructing the subject* is not without its lacunae. The attention paid to investigative practices in England or France is much less substantial than that accorded Germany and the United States. Moreover, Danziger might have explored more fully the mechanics of transforming the raw material of individual human beings into the various kinds of subjects that he identifies. But these are minor quibbles. *Constructing the subject* is an extraordinary achievement, one which will amply repay the time spent pondering it.

**John Carson, Wellcome Institute**

**Mark S Micale, *Approaching hysteria: disease and its interpretations*, Princeton University Press, 1995, pp. xii, 327, £24.95, \$29.95 (0-691-03717-5).**

This is a superb book that can be strongly recommended to all with an interest in the

"new hysteria studies", history of psychiatry or the historiography of disease. It may be read as a whole, revealing Micale as a versatile historian with an attractive prose style and an encyclopedic knowledge of his subject, or each of the four substantial chapters stands alone.

Chapter One is a comprehensive seventy-page review of the historiography of hysteria, organized by the major interpretive traditions—intellectual, psychoanalytic, feminist, sociopolitical. There are summaries and evaluations of work by Ilza Veith, Elaine Showalter, Jan Goldstein and Edward Shorter as well as by important French authors such as Étienne Trillat, Hélène Cixous, Catherine Clément and Georges Didi-Huberman. Micale is more sympathetic than many contemporary medical historians to diachronic intellectual histories of disease. He makes the point that even the simplest exposition of a few medical texts involves a crucial interpretive act in the choice of texts and construction of a canon. But, for him, this does not render such exercises worthless.

He is rightly disparaging about the grim results of the intersection between post-Lacanian French feminism and North American literary criticism, such as the 1985 anthology *In Dora's case*. However, I suspect that he, like most, has yet to find the energy to assimilate fully the fifty years of work by Jacques Lacan. In my opinion it may be premature to reject theoretical constructs that have served clinical work in France quite well, for example, "the Other" and "the Law of the Father", as non-lucid (p. 82).

Chapter Two is a brilliant exercise in prescriptive historiography. Anyone considering writing a history of a psychiatric disorder would be well advised to heed the first five of Micale's ten recommendations in particular. The stability of syndromes over time, the need to unite internal and external histories in a "sociosomatic" model of disease, widening the case history base, accessing past practices and therapeutics in addition to elite theory—all these vital issues are eloquently aired.

Chapter Three moves outside the medical literature to the use of hysteria as a metaphor