

Book Reviews

but also concerning his contemporaries, and seventeenth-century medicine and science in general. It will be a mine of information, in gratitude for which researchers for years will sing the praises of a very great yet humble scholar.

MICHAEL V. DEPORTE, *Nightmares and hobbyhorses. Swift, Sterne, and Augustan ideas of madness*, San Marino, Calif., The Huntington Library, (Folkestone, Kent, Dawsons), 1974, 8vo, pp. xi, 164, £5.00.

Madness seems to have been common amongst eighteenth-century poets, and in the past much endeavour has been expended in futile attempts to explain it by means of a psycho-analytical approach. Dr. DePorte, Associate Professor of English at the University of New Hampshire, praiseworthily, does not follow this trail. He begins by reviewing abnormal psychology in England, 1660 to 1760, and shows the fascination that insanity had for people at that time, as portrayed in literature. Swift thought it due to excessive imagination and *A tale of a tub* is one of the most intriguing pronouncements of this relationship. The author goes on to examine closely his use of madness in satire with the intention, as with his analysis of Sterne, to show that the idea of mental anomaly and the nature of irrationality were central to their work. Knowledge of this is clearly essential when dealing with the writings of these men. Awareness of the madness of Gulliver, for example, is equally necessary. Unlike their contemporary literary figures who were also mentally disturbed, Swift and Sterne illuminate for us eighteenth-century attitudes of mental abnormality. In the case of *A tale of a tub* and *Tristram Shandy* insanity determines their structure; not only this, Sterne's novel is intended to be of therapeutic value in cases of mental illness.

Professor DePorte has produced a scholarly study of the great Augustan theme of madness. It is of considerable importance to the medical historians, because it is a valuable contribution to the history of eighteenth-century medicine. And yet it is the kind of book likely to be overlooked. It should, in fact, be carefully examined by all those interested in the history of psychiatry and psychology, and in Augustan medicine and literature. The absence of a psycho-analytical aroma is especially in its favour. Hopefully it is a healthy sign of a new age of post-Freudian psychiatry which may now be opening.

MAX BYRD, *Visits to Bedlam. Madness and literature in the eighteenth century*, Columbia, S.C., University of South Carolina Press, 1974, 8vo, pp. xvii, 200, illus., \$9.95.

The author is an assistant professor of English in Yale University and is concerned here with eighteenth-century attitudes in Britain to insanity. His evidence is taken from the literature of the period, especially from the writings of Pope, Swift, Johnson, Cowper and Blake. A very similar work by Michael V. DePorte, *Nightmares and hobbyhorses. Swift, Sterne and Augustan ideas of madness* (San Marino, The Huntington Library, 1974) has recently covered much the same ground at much the same level of scholarship.

Like DePorte, Byrd avoids the psycho-analytic approach and prefers to present