deconstruction demonstrate his fundamental law or affect Maxwell's account of electromagnetic induction?

These are small potatoes, however, when you consider that "electrical experiments could mold politics as much as politics did electricity." Do not think that the meaning of this equality is that neither affected the other. No sirree. "Replacing the Newtonian philosophy with the electrical theory of the universe meant replacing the whole social, political, and religious order that underpinned early-nineteenth-century life."

A final grotesque. "By the 1830s the dominant ethos had shifted away from Enlightenment ideals [progress via association and co-operation]. Scientific discovery and progress were now held to emerge from the workings of isolated genius rather than from dubious cabals such as the Lunar Society with which Priestley had been associated." Let us leave aside whether the Royal Society, the Académie des sciences in Paris, the universities of Europe, and the republic of letters in the later eighteenth century were or are aptly characterized as dubious cabals. Was England in the 1830s distinguished for practising the cult of the isolated scientific genius? No. Then and there the greatest of all clubs for scientific men, the British Association for the Advancement of Science, was founded and waxed exceedingly. This peculiar clubbiness was so conspicuous that Dickens made it a subject of satire. Morus' extravagances deserve a place in the Proceedings of the Mudfog Association for the Advancement of Everything and the Transactions of the Pickwick Club, as an addendum to its president's theory of tittlebats.

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Jennifer Ford, *Coleridge on dreaming: romanticism, dreams, and the medical imagination*, Cambridge Studies in Romanticism 26, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. xii, 256, £37.50, $59.95 (0-521-58316-0).

Since the Greeks the category *imagination* has been configured to belong to poets and gods—far from therapy-seeking doctors, although shamans among doctors interpreted the imagination's *dreams*; this proprietary status despite the more recent *medicalization* of *the* imagination (the article is crucial) as an anatomical region of the *corpora fabrica* in the Renaissance and Enlightenment. By the time of the French Revolution *the* imagination had been medicalized (i.e., mechanized, anatomized, physiologized, neuralized) to such degree that it was unthinkable to visualize its operations other than mechanically (these *were* visual conceptions or pictures in words) or apart from material foundations. Enter Charcot, Freud, and Jung and still another view predominates. Yet set the dials earlier or later and ask, who *owned* the discourses of imagination? The question is more difficult to answer. After *c.* 1500 no one group: not artists, not poets, not doctors. Proof of ownership and its consequences constitutes the genuine methodology of Ford's splendid book, although Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834), the polymathic Romantic thinker and theorist, is her alleged protagonist. Coleridge proves an excellent test-case considering that his notebooks have been neglected.

But Coleridge's organic and vitalist philosophy demonstrates that not even he could dislodge this European theory of imagination from its Enlightenment material-mechanic moorings. Moving forward (Coleridge died in 1834), philosophers regularly consulted his aesthetics, especially his dream theory placing dreams on a still more physiological footing than his materialist predecessors.

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Coleridge, like Ludwig Biswanger, Freud and Jung after him, also developed a fragmented dream theory that speculated about its spaces (his "somnial or morphean space"), the disparity between waking and dream states, nightmares, prophecies, wandering malignant spirits, dream language encoded in dialect, syntax, and vocabulary, and the relation of nocturnal dreaming to the genesis of poetry—topics that continue to haunt us today.

It is hardly news that Coleridge veered from a psychological to a physiological basis. A generation ago historians Joseph Needham and Walter Pagel—polymathic scholars like Coleridge—adumbrated Coleridge's religious biology. More recently, Meyer Abrams, Thomas McFarland and Trevor Levere, have been impressed by the primary role of materialism in Coleridge's thought without diminishing his significance as literary theorist or scientific philosopher-poet of imagination. Now Ford has extended their work by focusing on Coleridge's dream theory and expounds its transdisciplinary foundation as *both* medical *and* literary. "What is particularly fascinating", Ford claims, "is that both poets *and* medical writers entered the debate concerning the nature of the imagination" (p. 6).

Among Ford's contexts (biographical, historical, psychological, medical) her discussion of Coleridge's language of dreams is the most original. Showing that "Coleridge was firmly convinced that dreams have a unique language: a language primarily expressed in images and sensation" (p. 56), she explains what this symbolic language was. Others, especially Gotthilf Heinrich von Schubert in *Die Symbolik des Traumes* (1814), had also investigated dream language. But Coleridge took matters further, especially when affirming "the possibility that dreamer and dramatis personae are independent entities" (p. 58). Coleridge's "slippages" (p. 76) from English into Greek are especially intriguing here; as are the independent nocturnal entities "Coleridge the man" and "dream-Coleridge" (p. 77). The road forward to the dreamer in pain in Freud and Jung is not far away. The implication for other Romantics—painters, composers, poets; the Johann Heinrich Füsslis, Robert Schumanns, John Keats's—is magisterial. This is not the work of a flimsy literary critic construing dreams as metaphors but the historical embodiment of the philosophies of organicism practising the arts of Apollo.

Ford also demonstrates that Coleridge's "medicalized imagination" figures deeply in his organic view of life. During the epoch of Coleridge's maturity and adulthood (1780–1830) the life sciences underwent their largest cultural revolution in centuries, creating a virtual transformation in knowledge. German *natur philosophes* from Blumenbach (whose lectures Coleridge attended while he was in Germany) and Kant, to Goethe and Herder, discoursed on "imagination", as did English medical doctors Thomas Beddoes and Erasmus Darwin. Coleridge capped these thinkers by demonstrating the effect of "organic life theory" on the artistic imagination, especially the power of dreams over his own life, consumed as he claimed to be by a corporeal body in pain: frail, diseased, addicted to substance abuse.

For us today the cultural mindset Coleridge inherited from the generation 1740–1770, lorded over by its philosophically engaged medical men, has almost fallen out of memory, especially its biological components. This was a milieu aptly surveyed by the late Jacques Roger in *Les sciences de la vie* (1963) and Peter Gay, later embodied into "words and things" by Foucault, among whose company Ford's book belongs. Dream thinkers from Artemiodorus to *The dream book of Daniel* (1542) were important. But it was primarily more recent British figures—diverse Scottish empirical philosophers, poet-physicians Mark Akenside, Oliver Goldsmith, Tobias Smollett, David Hartley, after whom

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Coleridge named his own son—who constituted the panoply from whose ideas Coleridge mounted his own dream theory almost a century before Freud's *Interpretation of dreams* (1900).

A desideratum is sometimes lodged against books like this on lines that they are not explicit about the *moment of interface* between creative act and physiological process. In this instance, the dream act and the medical components on which dreams depend. Traditional literary critics, uninformed about the transdisciplinary status of the organic life sciences, are especially prone to this artificial rift between a presumed bodiless psychology and mindless physiology; partly so because they cannot conceive that sublime "poetic imagination" would stoop to anatomical innards (dare one say bowels?) of mind-body dualism.

Yet even poets, writers, and composers have proclaimed the last word on the matter, confirming that Dr Ford has nothing to fret about. Rabelais, a doctor-writer of the finest type, yearned to know about the bellies of Sophocles and Pindar. Swift pondered what Rabelais ate and dreamed. Freud, in a famous passage in *Civilization and its discontents*, rhapsodized on Rabelais' digestion as the key to his fecund mind. And so forth down through Western civilization. Ford is helpful in putting the pieces back together again.

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Karl Heinz Bloch, *Die Bekämpfung der Jugendmasturbation im 18. Jahrhundert. Ursachen—Verlauf—Nachwirkungen*, Studien zur Sexualpädagogik, Band 11, Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 1998, pp. 666, £33.00, DM 89.00, $51.95 (3-631-33499-0).

Karl Heinz Bloch is not the first to study masturbation. Indeed, over the last decades, a rather standard interpretation has emerged. The (abbreviated) story runs something like this. Before Samuel Tissot's work on onanism appeared in the 1760s, few besides churchman were especially anxious about masturbation. It counted, to be sure, as a sin and generally as an unnatural one like homosexuality and bestiality. Medical opinion, however, could condone masturbation and some physicians deemed immoderate restraint harmful to health. This relative air of tolerance suddenly disappeared in the mid to late eighteenth century when a series of second-rate physicians "sounded the alarm" with their shrill insistence that masturbation was "above all for young people extremely dangerous" (p. 54). Self-abuse stunted growth, sapped the ability to conceive and bear children, sensibly diminished bodily strength, underlay a whole series of diseases (ranging from failing memory to dyspepsia to general cachexia), and could, in extreme cases, terminate in early death. The assault launched by medical men and educational reformers (from Jean-Jacques Rousseau to Johann Basedow and beyond) ended the age of forbearance and ushered in a vigorous and even brutal offensive on masturbating youth. The war on masturbation was somehow linked to the growing power of the bourgeoisie and the imposition of bourgeois morality and virtues as societal norms.

Most of this interpretation Karl Heinz Bloch shows to be either wrong or misguided. First, no golden age of "masturbatory bliss" or even mere indifference ever existed. Masturbation before the eighteenth century was adjudged a serious sin and medical opinion split on its benefits or risks. Second, important forerunners pre-dated Tissot and the educational reformers of the eighteenth century. John Locke's emphasis on the child and on the necessity for forming a sound mind in a sound body was one root of the rising concern about the effects of masturbation. Rousseau also sounded the

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