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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 churchmen 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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tocsin, as did earlier writers like the theologian Richard Capel in his *Tentations* (1633) or the anonymous Englishman in his *Onania* (1710). Third, these precursors had also—if in an indirect fashion—commented on the physical dangers of masturbation that they regarded as most threatening to the physically and morally immature.

Bloch argues that previous commentators have missed or failed to credit what was really novel about attitudes toward masturbation in the eighteenth century. Just those authorities who seem so unreasonably wrought-up about a “harmless practice” were by no means marginal figures and woolly-minded pseudo-intellectuals. They represented the best medical knowledge of the day. Moreover, fears about masturbation cannot, Bloch shows, be separated from a broader programme of greater concern for children, educational reforms that stressed the moral, physical, and intellectual development of the individual, and programmes for the sexual enlightenment of youth. Much of the growing fixation on masturbation derived as well from the higher valuation placed on the family by, for instance, both the Puritans and the Pietists. The new emphasis on family and marriage was not merely directed toward maintaining social stability or cementing the disintegrating foundations of family life, but stressed equally the benefits of marital harmony and sexual satisfaction for both spouses in the marriage bed. Thus, much of the campaign against masturbation sought to promote the good of the individual, raise robust progenitors, and create the preconditions for sexual fulfillment in later life. We may not agree with the strategies they deployed, but, seen in this light, the jeremiads launched against masturbation seem far less oppressive, less hysterical, and less mean-spirited than most observers have suggested. Bloch succeeds in placing the fight against masturbation firmly in a historical context that valued an education designed to nurture individual development and, ultimately, enhance

individual happiness. He justly refuses to view the anti-masturbation crusade as a plot hatched by a bunch of narrow-minded, poorly educated bigots who feared sexual activity and sought to throttle it and who based their beliefs on questionable medical and biological premises.

Bloch's refusal to condemn the anti-masturbation writers wholesale is historically important. His book is, of course, not about masturbation but rather about *attitudes toward* masturbation. The history of masturbation itself continues to elude the historian's grasp and may always do so. Bloch's work offers, however, a reliable digest of texts for those who might want to attempt the more difficult task of writing a social history of masturbation. He painstakingly compares contents as well as various editions, emendations, and later additions. Such attention to detail allows him to correct an array of sloppy errors and misinterpretations many have made and others have repeated. Unfortunately, his caution also makes the book almost unreadable. In his desire to be accurate, he fails in the author's other duty: to select, judge, and weigh materials, to present in the text what is central to the argument, and to discard the rest or banish it to a footnote. Asides and tangential statements mangle his paragraphs and make it virtually impossible for the reader to follow the thread of argument. Do we really need parenthetical translations for such unproblematic terms and phrases as “schlimmer (worse)”, “in sich und aus sich selbst (in of it itself)”, or “Unrecht (wrong)” (p. 76)? Equally annoying is Bloch's obsessive notation of minor errors and his relentless listing of factual minutiae. Must we really care if one scholar mistakenly cites page six instead of page three, or that the section on masturbation in one edition is three pages long, in another six, and in yet another four? Certainly we must be concerned with accuracy, but this petty cataloguing seems rather ungenerous and leaves the reader gasping for relief. Still, Bloch's major points

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are good ones and should be taken seriously by anyone who approaches this sticky subject.

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Philipp Gutmann, *Zur Reifizierung des Sexuellen im 19. Jahrhundert. Der Beginn einer Scientia sexualis, dargestellt anhand dreier Texte von Hermann Joseph Löwenstein, Joseph Häussler und Heinrich Kaan*, Marburger Schriften zur Medizingeschichte, Band 38, Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 1998, pp. 231, £25.00, DM 69.00, \$39.95 (3-631-33686-1).

This doctoral thesis was written by a German doctor and psychologist under the supervision of the medical historian Sigusch. It falls into two parts: in the first several introductory chapters put the work of three nineteenth-century authors on sexuality (Hermann Joseph Löwenstein, 1823, Joseph Häussler, 1826, and Heinrich Kaan, 1844) into their historical context. It also gives a summary of the three works discussed. The second consists of the translations from Latin into German of Löwenstein's and Kaan's works (Häussler's book was published in German). These are the first full translations of these works from the Latin and they take up a total of 138 pages of the thesis.

With the publication of this second part alone, Philipp Gutmann does indeed do a great favour to every historian interested in the history of sexuality. Not only were Löwenstein's dissertation on sexual deviations and Kaan's often quoted book *Psychopathia sexualis* linguistically inaccessible to many, they are also difficult to find in libraries. Making these seminal sources accessible is of great help.

The first part of the thesis adds some useful remarks, although it tends to stay on a very general level. For example, in the

summary of the theoretical history of medicine of the nineteenth century in 8 pages it uses exclusively the standard histories of medicine, such as Ackerknecht's *Short history of psychiatry*. This section seems therefore to address a more general audience who would be unlikely to read the thesis. The chapter on the summaries of the three works described is useful for a brief overview of Löwenstein's, Häussler's and Kaan's opinions, although it inevitably contains Gutmann's categories and judgements. What I found laudable and impressive is that the author discovered some new facts on the life of Heinrich Kaan (pp. 26–8) using local Austrian archives as well as obscure regional journals (*Ischler Wochenblatt*).

The thesis is written in a clear and agreeable style. It is accurate and well documented. The argument is more predictable than innovative, but it does not claim to be more than an accurate description of the three works it quotes. My main criticism is that the title of the thesis seems badly chosen. It is neither readily understandable, nor does it get fully elaborated, for example, it makes allusion to Michel Foucault's terminology when he is mentioned only in a short paragraph.

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Eberhard Wolff, *Einschneidende Massnahmen, Pockenschutzimpfung und traditionale Gesellschaft im Württemberg des frühen 19. Jahrhunderts*, Medizin, Gesellschaft und Geschichte, Beiheft 10, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner, 1998, pp. 524, DM/SFr 148.00 (3-515-06826-0).

The fight against smallpox is a successful story in medical history. The terrible infectious disease was a great threat and a major killer during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It was, however, also