

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Benjamin Reiss.** *Theaters of Madness: Insane Asylums and Nineteenth-Century American Culture*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008. xi + 237 pp. \$50 (cloth). ISBN-13: 978-0-226-70963-5.

Benjamin Reiss's *Theaters of Madness* is a fascinating attempt to enliven and deepen the literature on cultural definitions of madness and their implications for democratic institutions. A literary scholar with historical sensibilities, Reiss offers readings of a wide variety of "texts" to add irony and nuance to our understanding of what he views as a central problem for nineteenth-century Americans: the involuntary restraint of those deemed mentally incapable of responsibly exercising personal liberty. He demonstrates from the outset that the issue resonated beyond legal and medical circles to the broader cultural horizon. Politicians, reformers, and creative artists grappled with the challenge of insanity to republican institutions and focused on the asylum as the embodiment of their hopes and fears. Reiss presents brief insightful commentary on major scholarly views of the asylum movement and attempts to penetrate the consciousness of incarcerated citizens even as he assesses the meaning of asylum reform in its own time and for the present.

*Theaters of Madness* gives us neither a comprehensive historical reconsideration nor a thoroughgoing revision of Erving Goffman or Michel Foucault. Rather, Reiss uses a kaleidoscopic approach that mines forgotten details of asylum history and offers new readings of classic texts. He brings together six essay-length chapters engaging "cultural life in the nineteenth-century asylum and asylum life in nineteenth-century culture" in the cause of "recording the dialectical tension between the institutional processing of culture and the cultural processing of the institution" (p. 17).

These "snapshots," as Reiss calls his individual explorations, remind one of the occasional motion picture that seeks the soul of a city or the essence of an emotion by collecting short subjects around its theme, but instead of Paris or Love the focus is the asylum. Three pieces look at aspects of life inside the walls and three take the view from without. Woven into all six chapters are considerations of race, creativity, gender, power, and the paradoxical responses of republican society as it sought a means to control personal behavior it deemed a threat to personal liberty. Reiss makes no claim for "thoroughness or even representativeness" and describes some of his cases as "transparently exceptional, strange, or offbeat." Instead, he notes, he followed his nose in seeking subjects that illustrated "individuals caught up in a system that would erase their particularity in order to return them—paradoxically—to a society that valued individual liberties above all" (p. 17).

The most original chapters are those devoted to the inmates themselves. Reiss tracks the career of A. S. M., who became a patient at the New York State Lunatic Asylum at Utica in 1843, less than a year after its founding. Eight years later he became editor of the *Opal*, a patient-run and -written literary magazine of the sort most scholars have deemed simply tightly controlled "house organs" that reflected little of the patients' true feelings about incarceration. Assuming that central truth, Reiss argues that subtexts abound in such writings, and spins out an extremely wide-ranging and interesting argument that places the *Opal* within antebellum literary culture as well as within the internal structure of the institution. The author sees in the talented but odd A. S. M.—he writes on asylum walls and eats his own feces—a creative mind who actually feels safer at the asylum than in society and, as Reiss notes, wants "to stay put."

Reiss argues that this position was itself a rebuke of the official asylum vision, which sought ways to make the insane normal enough to return to society (p. 47).

A chapter on the inmate troupe of blackface minstrels active at the Utica asylum in the 1840s and 1850s reveals an equally fascinating interpretive weave that moves from institution to society at large. Reiss juxtaposes questions of race and freedom as well as order and disorder. He finds complex meaning in the pairing of two marginal groups, black and insane, on the stage of the asylum, and explores the intentions of the asylum's administrators and doctors in encouraging these "entertainments." Reiss also speculates on the possible meanings of such shows for the patients, with twists and turns that illuminate the history of minstrelsy in "normal" society as well as within the institutions. A similar juxtaposition of the visions of authorities and inmates highlights the chapter on Shakespeare and his vogue among psychiatrists of the era.

The last three chapters, not quite as startlingly engaging, in part because of our familiarity with the literary figures involved, continue an unfolding interpretation through literary works and circumstance that link society and institutions for the insane: Ralph Waldo Emerson sadly endorses the incarceration of a poet whose talents he celebrated; Edgar Allan Poe comments on society, republicanism, and madness in his short story, "The System of Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether"; and popular exposés of patient life dampen public enthusiasm for the asylum. Themes the author articulates in the early chapters now find expression outside the asylum walls.

Despite its wide-ranging and highly speculative bent, *Theaters of Madness* serves the salutary function of reopening the question of the asylum and madness in original readings of both familiar and unfamiliar cases. It does so across disciplines and with due respect for the scholarship that preceded it. One need not agree with Reiss's methods or interpretive suggestions to sense their usefulness. He admits the limits of his inquiry early on and throughout but employs this strategic modesty in the cause of humanizing and rehistoricizing his subject. Always creative, though sometimes with a frustratingly thin supply of evidence, *Theaters of Madness* offers a rich read of nineteenth-century America's grappling with one of the most intractable aspects of the human condition.

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**George Makari.** *Revolution in Mind: The Creation of Psychoanalysis.* New York: Harper-Collins, 2008. 613 pp. \$32.50 (cloth). ISBN 978-0-06-134661-3.

George Makari, a psychoanalyst, psychiatrist, and historian, set himself an ambitious, seemingly unattainable task. He sought to provide a detailed, comprehensive account of the development of psychoanalysis from the beginnings in the late nineteenth century until the end of World War II. In accomplishing his task, he has created a masterwork. Despite my having what I think of as an extensive background in this area, I found myself continually surprised by how much new I was learning. Makari not only provides all the specifics, such as

accounts of the thinkers and intellectual movements that set the stage for psychoanalysis, of the battles among various early psychoanalysts, and of the interaction between psychoanalytic ideas and the surrounding culture. He also formulates integrative theses about the larger themes of each period of psychoanalytic history.

As Makari argues, a great challenge faced the Western world in the second half of the twentieth century: how to understand the inner life of human beings. The traditional explanations offered by philosophy and religion were seen as wanting. Science seemed to have explained the workings of the outer world, with discoveries in physics, chemistry, and biology. But how to make sense of what goes on in the deepest recesses of a person, in a person's mind?

At the same time, various odd phenomena, little understood by science, seemed to point in the direction of the hidden workings of the mind. There was the disease of hysteria, in which an apparently physical disorder, such as a paralysis, exists despite there being no physical cause. Hypnosis also showed that the mind operates out of consciousness. And then there were sexual perversions and fetishes; why would people act in such seemingly irrational ways?

Sigmund Freud, Makari points out, developed a theory of mind that co-opted three of the major movements of the time: psychophysics, an attempt to construct a scientific psychology; French psychopathology, which showed that psychiatric disorders had causes; and sexology, the study of sexual behavior as pioneered by Richard von Krafft-Ebing and Havelock Ellis. Not only was Freud's early version of psychoanalytic theory more elegant and comprehensive than any of the other views of the day, but it came with a method of treatment, the first widely used form of psychotherapy. By contrast to Freud, the consensus view of the French psychopathologists, such as Jean-Martin Charcot, was that psychiatric disorders, because they stemmed from degeneracy, could not be cured.

As psychoanalysis developed, there were constant battles. Those who differed too sharply with Freud, such as Alfred Adler and Carl Jung, came to be branded as dissidents and they quit, or were expelled from, the movement. Makari perceptively notes that Freud regularly extruded the dissidents and then incorporated key elements of their thinking in his various reformulations of psychoanalytic theory. For example, he drew from Adler's emphasis on the importance of inferiority when he introduced the concept of narcissism, and he partially answered Jung's complaint about the overemphasis on sexuality when he added the aggressive drive to his focus on the sexual drive.

By the 1920s and 1930s, Freud was still the central figure in psychoanalysis, but others now played a role in contributing to the field. For example, Karl Abraham, while using some of Freud's formulations, systematized the theory of psychosexual stages (oral, anal, phallic). Wilhelm Reich, again taking some hints from Freud, went beyond him in pointing out the importance of character (prefiguring our current interest in disorders of the whole personality, as opposed to discrete symptoms such as depression or a phobia). And Anna Freud took her father's stray comments about defenses and developed a systematic theory of the mechanisms of defense.

At Freud's death in 1939, psychoanalysis was a powerful, widespread movement that could carry on without him. Although Nazism virtually killed it off in Germany and Austria, psychoanalysis emerged from World War II with a strong foundation, especially in the United States and Great Britain. Makari notes that it was "the leading modern theory of the mind" (p. 485), with influence throughout Western culture, not only in psychiatry but also in literary studies, the courts, education, film, and our view of politicians.

It seems to me petty, in the light of Makari's achievement, to point out criticisms. I do note, though, that in concentrating on the German-speaking and English-speaking countries, he has little to say about France and South America. And, in his discussion of the United

States, he focuses on New York City and underemphasizes developments in other cities, such as Chicago and Boston.

Makari delineates convincingly the central problem for psychoanalysis throughout its development. Psychoanalysis revolves around the unconscious, but the unconscious, by its very nature, is not accessible to consciousness; it cannot be known. When there were disputes between two thinkers, as there were constantly, there was no valid way of deciding which point of view was better. Is there such a thing as the death instinct? Do women think of themselves as castrated men? Should psychoanalytic clinicians stick strictly to interpreting the unconscious or should they try to help patients in other ways? There is no sure way of answering these questions and many others that confront psychoanalysts.

Yet psychoanalysis has developed into an invaluable, varied, penetrating set of understandings of the inner world. The large majority of its practitioners have moved beyond the narrow, doctrinaire aspects that were so limiting in the earlier years. While Makari does not say explicitly how this happened, his study provides the material for constructing an explanation. Freud developed an elegant theory, or, more accurately, series of theories, that sought to give explanations for a wide range of psychological phenomena, including psychiatric symptoms, artistic creation, character problems, ambition, and leadership. His theory attracted followers and provided them with a basic approach that could be altered and improved upon. Many, perhaps most, of the specifics are no longer widely accepted by psychoanalysts, even notions that were central to Freud, such as the universality of the Oedipus complex and the pervasiveness of sexual conflict. But the contours of Freud's approach provided a general view of the mind that is central to our culture's current view and that forms the underpinnings of psychodynamic and cognitive psychology. The view is that people are frequently unaware of their motivations, they suffer from unconscious conflicts, and they form relationships based on their previous experiences, especially those of childhood.

Freud also created psychotherapy, a method for treating psychiatric disorder, at a time when no effective treatments existed. And capitalizing on the attraction that his theories and method of treatment had, he built a movement that grew steadily over the years. Hence there was a body of intelligent, curious people who were dedicated to the understanding of the inner world. And one factor kept them grounded. They treated patients. Because psychoanalytic method is based on listening as patients explore their thoughts in depth, the psychoanalytic practitioners all had extensive exposure to other people's personal experience. In addition, there is a self-correcting factor built into the field. Systematic studies of different treatment approaches seem to be of limited value for psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic therapy. But over the years, and in a myriad of ways, the field changes and improves based on what brings the best results. Individual therapists learn from supervisors and case conferences and from the psychoanalytic literature, and treatment methods increasingly, if imperfectly and slowly, become more refined.

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**Kurt Danziger.** *Marking the Mind: A History of Memory.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. 320 pp. \$108 (cloth) ISBN-13: 978-0521898157. \$42 (paper) ISBN-13: 978-0521726412. \$37.32 (Kindle edition) ASIN: B001JEPW9K.

This book is a continuation of Kurt Danziger's last book, *Naming the Mind* (1997). The latter covered the history of psychological categories like intelligence, behavior, attitude, motivation, and personality. All of them are of relatively recent origin and it is easy to appreciate their social basis when it is known that they have a short history. The category of memory is a very different proposition. It has existed since the beginning of recorded history and has been the subject of human discourse ever since. It might, therefore, be tempting to see it as a natural kind, that is, a category that reflects the division of nature itself.

Because of this, Danziger opens the book with a question: "Does memory have a history?" Memory is usually seen as a quasi-biological phenomenon that does not vary over time. The only thing that might vary is our understanding of how it works. Danziger clearly does not accept this view. A key concept here is that of "mnemonic values." Societies differ in the expectations they place on memory and the resources they provide for the fulfillment of these tasks. To take an obvious example, greater demands are placed on memory in non-literate societies. This explains the importance of mnemonics in the ancient and medieval worlds. It is no accident that they declined in importance after the invention of the printing press. Technological developments can also lead to new demands. In nonliterate societies, accurate recall is not an important issue. Thus, music that is part of an oral tradition is rarely played the same way twice, just as stories that are part of an oral tradition are rarely told the same way twice. The availability of written records, as well as later developments like the photograph and the phonograph, brought the issue of accuracy to the fore. Technology has also provided us with metaphors of memory. These have ranged from the wax tablet to the digital computer. An important point that Danziger makes is that these metaphors are not adopted at random. They are intimately related to the memory practices of the society in which they exist. For example, the adoption of accuracy as a mnemonic value led to the idea of memory as a copying machine. The very notion of memory had changed as a result.

As Danziger points out, the entire history of memory cannot be covered in a single book. Indeed, one human lifetime would not be enough to cover it. He therefore selects different topics for the chapters of the book. Each one has its own chronology and is almost an independent piece of work. The topics covered include metaphors of memory, the use of mnemonics for improving memory, the relationship between memory and truth, the medicalization of memory, the rise of experimental psychology, the different types of memory that have been postulated over the years, such as episodic and semantic memory, and the various attempts to locate memory in the brain. Some of the details in these discussions are very interesting. We learn, for example, that Wundt did not establish an experimental psychology of memory because he did not regard it as a legitimate scientific category. Like reading or counting, "remembering" was an activity of the mind that was based on more fundamental processes. These views were not unusual in Germany at the time. We also learn that the work of Wilder Penfield has been widely misinterpreted. Penfield famously applied electrical stimulation to the brains of his patients during surgery, and they are said to have experienced memories of events that had been long forgotten. In reality, only a small percentage of his patients reported experiences of this kind and, even in these cases, it is far from clear that the reports were of

genuine memories. The misinterpretation is a product of the long-held desire to find a location for memory in the brain.

Space restrictions prevent me from discussing each one of these topics in detail. I will therefore concentrate on a key question that is posed at the end of the book: “Is memory in the head?” As Danziger points out, psychology has inherited an individualistic metaphysics from philosophy. Psychological phenomena are thought to occur in the heads of individuals, hence the long history of trying to find their location in the brain. Also, they have been traditionally studied in isolation from the social context in which they occur. Memory is not something we can see, touch, or smell. What we see are human activities, and we have learned through the course of socialization to apply the label “remembering” to some of them. However, these activities always take place in a social context, and it is only by studying them in this context that we can hope to understand them. Danziger points to Bartlett and Vygotsky as examples of psychologists who studied psychological phenomena in their social context. Thus the book is not just a contribution to history; it points to a different way of doing psychology. These views were implicit in *Naming the Mind*, but they are discussed in much greater detail in *Marking the Mind*. It goes without saying that these points apply not just to memory but also to the various other basic categories of psychology.

Danziger’s previous works, *Constructing the Subject* (1990) and *Naming the Mind*, broke new ground in the history of psychology and are now regarded as modern classics in the field. *Marking the Mind* is at least the equal of these works. It should be obligatory reading for historians of psychology. It should also be obligatory reading for experimental psychologists and cognitive scientists, but that may be too much to expect.

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**Edwin R. Wallace IV and John Gach (Eds.). *History of Psychiatry and Medical Psychology: With an Epilogue on Psychiatry and the Mind–Body Relation*. New York: Springer Science + Business Media, 2008. 862 pp. \$219.00 (cloth). ISBN-13: 978-0387347080.**

As psychiatrists busy themselves with working out the details of the fifth version of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*—shrouded in secrecy, it must be added—the history of psychiatry, psychotherapy, and mental illness is as active and popular as ever before. Monographs, articles, biographies and memoirs, documentaries, and films about mental disorders and their treatment are now a regular part of historical scholarship and popular culture. The field has come a long way since its beginnings in the first half of the twentieth century, when mostly practitioners wrote histories in a more or less internalist and Whiggish fashion.

Cultural history, gender studies, the social study of race, science and technology studies, literary studies, ethnography, critical psychology, and bioethics have now all left their mark on how madness and psychiatry have come to be understood as artifacts of human history.

And yet, despite how much has changed in the ways we now come to see the history of madness and therapeutic work, few archivally informed, comprehensive histories of this terrain have been written in English since the 1960s. Two exceptions—Gerald N. Grob's *The Mad among Us* (1994) and Edward Shorter's *History of Psychiatry* (1997)—have their limitations. Grob focuses only on the United States, while Shorter is exclusively concerned with modern history, and his interpretations are often skewed by his dogged defense of biological psychiatry. Unfortunately, Roy Porter's 2002 *Madness: A Brief History* appears to have little currency. As Edwin R. Wallace IV and John Gach lament, it is Gregory Zilboorg's 1967 edition of *The History of Medical Psychology* and Franz Alexander and Sheldon Selesnick's 1966 *The History of Psychiatry* that are most often used in psychiatric residencies. The time is certainly ripe for an up-to-date, broad, and affordable history of psychiatry and psychotherapy.

This is the need that Wallace and Gach try to address, with partial success. At 800+ pages and a price tag of \$219, the book is cumbersome and unaffordable for most students and scholars. The essays in the volume, however, do give the reader a decent sense of the findings and range of approaches in the historiography of psychiatry today. Some of the most prominent names in the field are here: German Berrios, Sander Gilman, Gerald Grob, David Healy, Nancy Tomes, and Dora Weiner, among others. Their essays often do little more than summarize some of their earlier contributions to the historiography of psychiatry, but in doing so, they provide a useful introduction to the state of the art.

As in any edited volume, the quality of the essays is uneven. Bennett Simon's piece on madness in the ancient world, for instance, relies on no original sources other than English translations, while George Mora's essays on medieval and Renaissance developments rely almost exclusively on secondary literature published before 1985. The selection of topics covered—organized into the capacious categories “proto-psychiatry,” “growth of psychiatry as a medical specialty,” “concepts and topics,” and “psychiatry and the mind-body relation”—at times appears to reflect the interests of the editors and individual authors, rather than the field as a whole.

That said, there are some real gems here. Edwin Wallace's introduction to historiography is ambitious and nuanced. Dora Weiner's essays on the impact of the Enlightenment and Philippe Pinel on French psychiatry are refreshingly insightful, allowing us to see how the myth of Pinel as chain-breaker has made us blind to the many novel contributions of a host of mad-doctors in the eighteenth century. German Berrios unpacks the epistemology of modern psychiatry, arguing that what distinguished nineteenth-century psychiatry from its predecessors was that the former came to assume a common descriptive language “based on an analytical and pictorial epistemology that dealt with symptoms independently and assumed the same symptom might be seen in different forms of madness” (p. 355).

But, in the end, this volume should probably be evaluated not on the merits of its novelty for specialists, but of its usefulness for novices. On that count, the book accomplishes some things, but it misses the mark on other counts. The essay by Nancy Tomes on the development of clinical psychology, social work, and psychiatric nursing is a good example. Tomes does a commendable job in exploring the manner by which the mental health team concept displaced medical hegemony over psychiatric care during the last two-thirds of the twentieth century. In doing so, she highlights the critical role played by non-medical caretakers in history. Yet this critically important dimension in the history of madness is, at best, only sparsely thematized

in the volume's essays. Little mention is made of the central role played by families, friends, and religious counselors—along with the variety of other non-medical healing practitioners—who have historically had the most direct and persistent effect on the lives of those afflicted.

In the end, it is fair to ask whether an edited volume is, in fact, the best way to achieve the goals of the editors. The different voices effectively highlight the interpretive open-endedness of the historiography of madness and mental illness. But they also lend a certain choppyness to the volume, and the style of a number of the essays is rather like that of an encyclopedia entry. This may be just the thing for medical students, but it limits the book's utility for other readers.

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**Pierre Saint-Arnaud.** *African American Pioneers of Sociology*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009. 381 pp. \$80 (cloth). ISBN: 0802091229.

Pierre Saint-Arnaud's *African American Pioneers of Sociology* focuses on the major African American sociologists who came of age in the pre-civil rights era: W. E. B. Du Bois, Oliver C. Cox, Horace Cayton, St. Clair Drake, E. Franklin Frazier, and Charles Johnson. Saint-Arnaud provides detailed expositions of the major works and career trajectories of each sociologist, paying particular attention to Du Bois and Frazier. He also analyzes how the institutional constraints of a segregated university system affected their work and situates "African American sociology" as a whole in relation to "Anglo American sociology." This work was first published in French in 2003, and its appearance now in a fine translation into English is one indication that research into the history of the American social sciences is becoming an increasingly international endeavor.

Scholars and students will find *African American Pioneers of Sociology* to be a useful overview of the topic. However, Saint-Arnaud does not make a significant contribution toward explaining the distinctive relationship between African American intellectuals and sociology. His analysis is limited by the use of two tropes that will strike twenty-first-century historians of social science as outdated: a celebration of the contributions of an "authentically African American sociology" (p. 3) in the face of the "unjust disregard" with which Saint-Arnaud believes they are now held (p. 119), and an insistence that the story of sociology is best understood as one of scientific progress.



Saint-Arnaud hopes to “rescue these first American sociologists of color from obscurity” (p. 3). While few scholars have considered these figures together *as sociologists*, their reputations today hardly need rescue. Rephrasing Talcott Parsons’s question, “Who now reads Spencer?” Saint-Arnaud opens by asking “Who now reads . . . Du Bois?” (p. 3). In fact, many people now read Du Bois, plenty more than read Spencer or Parsons. Any respectable list of classic American works of sociology includes Du Bois’s *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899).

Saint-Arnaud’s contention that his protagonists created an authentically “African American sociology” is equally problematic. (One wonders what an “inauthentic” African American sociology would look like.) This claim leads Saint-Arnaud to overstate the extent to which black scholars created a distinct sociological discourse. He often acknowledges in passing the importance of exchanges between black and white sociologists; his suggestion that Frazier and Johnson played a key role in influencing the later writings of their former teacher Robert Park is particularly intriguing. Yet, by including separate sections on “Anglo-American sociology” and “African American sociology” he gives the unfortunate impression that the two discourses operated in entirely different intellectual universes.

Saint-Arnaud celebrates early African American sociologists for their contributions to research methods and for the richness of their particular insights into American society. Yet he casts them as “pioneers” who made important contributions to the development of a scientific sociology but whose works lack contemporary relevance because they do not meet the more advanced standards of our time. In particular, he argues that they failed to develop a systematic scientific theory along the lines adopted by late twentieth-century sociologists such as Pierre Bourdieu. Though he blames the racist structure of power for this failure more than the sociologists themselves, he nevertheless faults African American sociologists for “the systematic interference or intrusion of ideology into their production of scientific knowledge about race” (p. 268). He also claims that they “did not succeed in building an abstract system of concepts that could interrogate social facts at a high level of generality and predict their likely empirical outcomes” (p. 269). Such arguments, however, substitute Saint-Arnaud’s contemporary sense of what sociology should do for the expressed views of the sociologists he studies. Sociologists such as Du Bois and Frazier could hardly have viewed the goal of creating a systematic sociology free from ideology as a positive or possible goal. While Saint-Arnaud ascribes their inability to predict the coming of the civil rights movement to their lack of a systematic sociological framework free from ideologically contaminated concepts, it is more accurately attributed to the particular positions they adopted (such as the presumed conservatism of black churches).

By placing these African American sociologists within a narrative that emphasizes the development of scientific progress according to today’s standards, Saint-Arnaud misses much of their significance. He evaluates them according to what he claims was “their fundamental objective[:] the institutionalization of a new sociological paradigm as legitimate and credible as the mainstream paradigm, if judged by the epistemological standards of the day” (p. 285). Yet this seems to reverse the actual priorities of these figures. These African American intellectuals wanted to provide an analysis that would lay bare the structures of American racism and by so doing aid in the pursuit of freedom and equality. Sociology was a means to that end. The historical question should not be, as it is for Saint-Arnaud, how did racist institutional structures prevent African American scholars from developing a more systematic sociology? Rather, it should be: Why did sociology, perhaps more than any other social scientific discipline, appeal to so many African American intellectuals? Answering that question would involve understanding Saint-Arnaud’s cast of characters as more than sociologists (and indeed many of them are best known for their anti-racist activities). Ideally, it would also involve

investigating the work and careers of less illustrious African Americans who were drawn to sociology. While a comprehensive history of African American sociologists in the twentieth century remains to be written, in the meantime, *African American Pioneers of Sociology* provides a useful compilation of information on the subject.

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**Edward Shorter and David Healy. *Shock Therapy: A History of Electroconvulsive Treatment in Mental Illness*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007. 398 pp. \$27.95 (cloth). ISBN 978-0813541693.**

Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), or shock therapy as it is more popularly known, is unique in the history of psychiatry—it has a long, contentious past and is still in use today. When the subject of ECT is raised, many become uncomfortable, imagining scenes of gruesome brutality or at least social control. Moreover, ECT polarizes practicing psychiatrists, as some groups advocate for increased use of ECT while others refuse to refer patients for fear of major side effects. Although historians of psychiatry in recent years have become interested in a range of somatic therapies, ECT has received relatively little attention. *Shock Therapy*, by historian Edward Shorter and psychopharmacologist and historian David Healy, begins to fill in the gap on this important topic.

*Shock Therapy* carefully documents the rise, decline, and rise again of convulsive therapies—insulin coma, metrazol, and especially electroconvulsive therapy (ECT). Within the hopelessness of early-twentieth-century institutional psychiatric care, pioneers such as Manfred Sakel (insulin coma) and Ladislaus Meduna (metrazol) developed somatic interventions with the hope of bringing life to profoundly ill patients. Ugo Cerletti and others developed a more effective method (using electricity) for producing the convulsions that seemed to help patients. In the 1930s and 1940s, especially during the turmoil of World War II, somatic treatments became important to psychiatrists and patients, and convulsive therapy practitioners and practices spread throughout the world. By mid-century, ECT had gained priority over the other methods of convulsive treatment, and enjoyed remarkable popularity within American and European psychiatry. Indeed, although American psychoanalysts were vocal in their public criticism of the treatment in the 1950s, they often quietly referred their patients for ECT.

As Shorter and Healy point out, the original methods for producing therapeutic convulsions were problematic in that they could be misused and often produced major side effects such as bone fractures. ECT practitioners by the 1960s and 1970s addressed these problems by modifying the treatment technique with anesthesia and decreased electrical stimulus strength. Yet by the 1970s, ECT was in serious disfavor in professional circles, as it was

opposed by both psychoanalysts (who decried anything other than psychotherapy) and biological psychiatrists (who were invested in medications). Further, movie portrayals and media coverage characterized ECT as barbaric and inhumane. Opposition to ECT became a rallying point within the rising anti-psychiatry movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Through a combination of professional and public concerns, ECT was placed under increasing legislative and professional scrutiny, and was restricted in a number of settings. Though the use of ECT had declined to low levels by the 1980s, Shorter and Healy point out that it underwent a resurgence in the last two decades, especially through the efforts of advocates such as New York psychiatrist Max Fink. The principles behind ECT have been so persuasive, Shorter and Healy explain, that the treatment has given rise to novel therapies such as transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), vagal nerve stimulation (VNS), and deep brain stimulation (DBS).

Shorter and Healy provide an important foundation in the history of ECT, especially in their discussions of historical actors' personalities and contexts, as well as the professional networks of practitioners in electroconvulsive therapy. Their variety of sources, including interviews as well as published and archival materials, create an evocative picture of the world of ECT development and practice. In addition, the authors make the interesting and provocative observation that psychoanalysts and psychologists have helped to fuel public opposition to ECT. Shorter and Healy are able to outline the methods of practitioners and researchers in convulsive therapy, and illustrate the thinking of these individuals in the past and the present. They also help us to understand how ECT advocates perceived that ECT works, even though the theories of its mechanism have changed over time.

Readers will likely be struck by the authors' unequivocal argument that ECT is a safe and effective treatment. In the context of the increasingly tense battles between ECT activists and opponents, it has become challenging to avoid a stand on one side or another of the issue of ECT safety and side effects. Shorter and Healy take the position that ECT is beneficial and that its drawbacks have been overblown (especially in comparison to medications). Although Shorter and Healy address opposition to ECT within their book, they tend to characterize anti-ECT opinion as irrational, especially as they frequently draw a comparison between penicillin and what they argue has been psychiatry's most effective treatment, ECT. Future historians will hopefully pick up on some threads of the story suggested in *Shock Therapy*, especially the role of gender, race, and ethnicity and the perspective of patients who have received ECT. In addition, other historians might help us better understand the nuances of the opposition to ECT, such as the role of the rhetoric of Nazism that has penetrated the anti-ECT crusade. But whatever history is written in the future, *Shock Therapy* will provide an invaluable base.

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**John C. Burnham.** *Accident Prone: A History of Technology, Psychology, and Misfits of the Machine Age*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009. 336 pp. \$40.00 (cloth). ISBN-13: 978-0226081175.

This book tells the story of how the “accident prone” became a human kind as Ian Hacking’s might say, but only briefly, and only for a limited group of professionals in the twentieth century. The idea of the accident-prone individual emerged simultaneously in Britain and Germany in the 1920s, reflecting the tensions and trials of an increasingly technical age, only to be eclipsed a few short decades later by the dominance of engineering models for improving safety, and a systems approach rather than a focus on individual behavior. Surprisingly, accident proneness did not become a psychiatric kind—it was *not* taken up by psychiatrists as a distinct illness category despite the fact that it evolved from the medical notion of individual susceptibility, and despite psychoanalytic inclinations to do so. In short, this volume stands as a history and an intriguing counter-history—a biography of an idea with a short but intense life.

Burnham tracks the origins of the concept of the accident prone from early designations of a careless person, or a person susceptible to accidents, to the simultaneous appearance of “accident prone” or *Unfallneigung* in 1926 in the work of the British psychologist Eric Farmer and the thought-psychologist Karl Marbe in Würzburg, Germany. Combing through insurance statistics, Marbe found that those who had had an accident were likely to have another, a finding attributable both to heredity and habit, and a tendency he likened to a propensity to make psychomotor errors on psychological tests. In Britain, studies on susceptibility to accidents and industrial fatigue from munitions factories were the conduit to a notion of the accident prone in the work of Eric Farmer on the Industrial Fatigue Research Board (with the assistance of E. G. Chambers). Psychological testing of reaction times in various experimental situations demonstrated a link between accident proneness and some kinds of motor coordination and nervous instability. “Accident prone” soon became a loosely linked type, a class of individuals defined by a host of factors measured by industrial psychologists with their batteries of vocational, psychophysiological, and reaction time tests. Other indicators of the accident-prone personality noted at the time were constitution, sensory acuity, eyesight, use of alcohol, medical disorders such as epilepsy, and temporary mental agitation.

Although the idea of the accident prone had only limited influence in Germany, it gained ground in Britain, and enjoyed even greater traction in the United States, particularly with safety experts of the 1930s who evaluated the skills of motor vehicle and public transport operators. Although accident proneness often had a hereditary component, it could also describe transient traits like fatigue that could be remedied by training and education. Some pro-labor industrial psychologists and supervisors argued that the accident prone problem was in good part environmental, and opted for education and transfer of accident-prone workers rather than discharge.

One fascinating chapter in the book details the resistance of psychiatrists to molding the accident-prone individual into a full-fledged disease type. Although Freudian psychoanalysts such as Karl Menninger explained some accidents as the fruits of unconscious wishes, these were seen as singular events, and not as a propensity to suffer multiple accidents. One exception was the psychosomaticist Helen Flanders Dunbar, who combined her analysis of cardiac and diabetic patients with those suffering from bone fractures, and viewed personality as

an important factor in what she called the “accident habit.” Her popularization of this idea reached the public with a description of, among other things, an accident-prone dog named Nick! Dunbar’s holistic psychosomatic perspective lost ground with psychiatrists in the post–World War II period, however, and with the slow decline in psychoanalytic views, accident proneness did not appear as a pathological syndrome or symptom in any formal psychiatric classification. Neither a generalizable trait, nor a treatable one, it was never central to psychiatric diagnostics.

Accident proneness thus remained in the purview of psychologists, safety experts, and physicians, particularly pediatricians. It also emerged in popular arenas as a recognizable sort or type of person. By the post–World War II period, the earlier concern with industrial accidents gave way to a dominating concern with traffic accidents, and a shift from a focus on individual behavior to engineering safety foreshadowed the decline of the importance of the idea of accident proneness. Other factors contributing to its demise were the popularity of cognitive psychology, the questioning of underlying stable personality traits and hereditary notions, and cautions against labeling groups socially deviant. The language of injury and error rather than accident became commonplace, leading to engineering and technical solutions rather than to an assessment of defective individuals.

Burnham’s research skills are in ample display in this volume, as he meticulously tracks the concept of the accident prone in industrial psychological and safety literature, medical accounts, and popular writings. Burnham is attentive to the many genres in each of these fields, shedding light on the ways an idea circulates through expert literatures, textbooks, and popular articles. With numerous interpretive contexts or streams of thought feeding into the concept of the accident prone, his account cuts across histories of technology, psychology, and medicine, with a breadth that reveals at once the fruits as well as some of the drawbacks of interdisciplinary study. In broad strokes, this account provides a window onto the shift from an early-twentieth-century conception of the techno-human encounter as a simple dyad, with a lens trained to the psychological and medical incapacities of the individual user, to a complex systems approach, identifying risk groups rather than individuals, and intervening to manipulate the environment rather than the individual. With its copious notes, extensive bibliography, and descriptions of many individual studies over the course of more than half a century, this book will certainly serve as an indispensable resource on the idea of the accident prone.

Writing the life history of an idea does not easily yield a death date, as Burnham points out, and even now, the notion of the accident-prone person persists in popular commentary, cartoons, and even poetry. What this book ably shows is that it has already lost its short-lived scientific soul.

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**Bruce H. Weber and David J. Depew (Eds.). *Evolution and Learning: The Baldwin Effect Reconsidered*.** Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003 (cloth), 2007 (paper). x + 341 pp. \$26.00 (paper). ISBN 978-0-262-23229-6 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-262-73181-2 (paper).

The “Baldwin Effect,” as such, has existed only since the mid-twentieth century. It was then that American paleontologist George Gaylord Simpson (1953) revived a late-nineteenth-century evolutionary theory just long enough to rename it and then downplay its evolutionary import. The theory Simpson recast as the Baldwin Effect was proposed independently, and near simultaneously, in 1896 by developmental psychologist James Mark Baldwin (1861–1934), comparative psychologist Conwy Lloyd Morgan (1852–1936), and vertebrate paleontologist Henry Fairfield Osborn (1857–1935). The Baldwin Effect, as it is now commonly known, contends that learning may guide the course of biological evolution in a non-Lamarckian way, if organisms and their descendants can be kept alive long enough for chance biological variations to arise that enhance or supplant initially learned behavior.

Although Simpson briefly resurrected organic selection in the 1950s, the most recent revival of the theory occurred in the late 1980s when computer simulation studies demonstrated the effect’s theoretical plausibility (Hinton & Nowlan, 1987). Discussion of the Baldwin Effect has proliferated since this time. As a result of this renewed interest, an interdisciplinary conference was held at Bennington College in the fall of 1999. This conference led to the publication of *Evolution and Learning: The Baldwin Effect Reconsidered*, edited by Bruce H. Weber (Robert H. Woodworth Professor of Science and Natural Philosophy at Bennington College and Professor of Biochemistry at California State University at Fullerton) and David J. Depew (Professor of Communication Studies and Rhetoric of Inquiry at the University of Iowa).

This book charts the reception of the Baldwin Effect from its initial proposal at the end of the nineteenth century up to modern times. Portions of this volume also delve into the more general contemporary issues in biology, specifically the relationship between development and evolution. Here, discussion turns to the appearance of evolutionary developmental biology (evo-devo), developmental systems theory (DST), and complex systems perspectives in the latter decades of the twentieth century. In large part, it is this resurgence of interest in the developmental constituents of evolution that has drawn attention to the Baldwin Effect in recent years.

The book is divided into three sections. In the first, “Baldwin Boosters, Baldwin Skeptics,” the intellectual history of the Baldwin Effect is examined, while the evolutionary import of the effect is also debated. The second and third sections of the book, “Baldwinism and Development” and “Beyond Baldwinism,” then move beyond historical accounts of the Baldwin Effect to current theoretical issues in development and evolution.

In part one, several accomplished philosophers of science, biology, and mind—Depew, Daniel Dennett, Terrence Deacon, Stephen Downes, and Peter Godfrey-Smith—address the contested evolutionary standing of the Baldwin Effect. While doing so, these scholars also chart the intellectual climate in which the effect was initially proposed, as well as the effect’s various manifestations over the course of the twentieth century. Here, the Modern Synthesis of Mendelian genetics and Darwinian evolutionary theory that began in the 1930s takes center stage. This synthesis entrenched reductionistic accounts of evolutionary change into evolutionary discourse, and assigned development a limited evolutionary role. Within the

Modern Synthesis, the Baldwin Effect had no place. Yet, even at the height of the synthesis, there were some who challenged the assumptions that excluded development from evolution. Throughout the chapters in this section, the Baldwin Effect is compared to another theory that gave plasticity a role in biological evolution: Conrad Waddington's mid-twentieth-century development of the theory of genetic assimilation. (Waddington argued that environmental change may expose previously hidden genetic variation, which may then be selected.) Although there is some debate over the exact relationship between the Baldwin Effect and genetic assimilation, the general conclusion presented in these chapters is that Waddington's ability to experimentally demonstrate the occurrence of genetic assimilation created theoretical space for the Baldwin Effect in twentieth-century evolutionary discourse.

The remaining two sections of this volume largely move beyond historical accounts of the Baldwin Effect to discuss the current theoretical issues in development and evolution. Arguments here use the Baldwin Effect as a rhetorical device to open up discussion of the importance of developmental perspectives for our understanding of evolution. Although theoretical considerations dominate the remaining chapters of the book, historical discussion is present throughout the volume. In the latter two-thirds of the book, the chapter by Griffiths is a particularly strong contribution. In it Griffiths accounts for Baldwin's development of the Baldwin Effect by relating the evolutionary theory to his other social theories. Nonetheless, most of the chapters in the two final sections of this volume address current evolutionary issues, including evo-devo, DST, and mind as an emergent phenomenon, with little mention of the Baldwin Effect itself.

Of the chapters that comprise this volume, the opening chapter by Depew provides the most detailed account of the intellectual trajectory of the Baldwin Effect, from its appearance in 1896 to modern times. For the historian of psychology or biology, *Evolution and Learning: The Baldwin Effect Reconsidered*, or roughly the first third thereof, provides a detailed account of the Baldwin Effect's place in the evolutionary discourse of the past century. In doing so, it is a valuable resource for those engaged in historical scholarship on topics that intersect with psychology, biology, and evolution.

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**Thomas C. Patterson.** *Karl Marx, Anthropologist*. Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2009. 256 pp. \$115.00 (cloth). \$36.00 (paper). ISBN 978-1-84520-511-9.

The title of Thomas C. Patterson's book, *Karl Marx, Anthropologist*, is deliberately provocative. In this book, Patterson sets out to do justice to Marx and show his relevance for today's anthropology by systematically reviewing the way Marx's interests are relevant for,

or correspond to, themes in today's anthropology. Consequently, each chapter in Patterson's book deals with one aspect of the Marxian body of thought and Marx's ideas about the nature of people and society. While Chapters 1 and 2 review the main influences on the development of Marx's ideas and the fundamental tenets of his anthropology, Chapters 3 to 7 systematically treat topics in chronological order, beginning with Marx's ideas on prehistory and the evolution of human society, his thoughts on historical change and pre-state societies, and finally moving on to his interests in capitalism. The last chapter of Patterson's book examines implications of the Marxian *oeuvre* for future directions in anthropology. How persuasive is Patterson's case? Though there are aspects of Patterson's reasoning and conclusion that are questionable, he has nonetheless produced a useful book with important implications—maybe even for the direction anthropology might take in the future.

Throughout the book, Patterson convincingly shows the correspondence between Marxian interests and developments in contemporary anthropology. To begin with, he argues that for Marx, different pre-capitalist modes do not constitute evolutionary stages. Unlike nineteenth-century evolutionists, Marx did not believe that development occurred through necessary evolutionary stages, and neither did he believe in environmental determinism (pp. 53–54, 57). Instead, Marx advocated “development contingency” or “non-teleological directionality” (ibid.). Similarly, Patterson suggests that Marx's was an integrative, engaged anthropology (pp. 61, 159, 171), shifting between different levels of abstraction, between local and regional levels of analysis (p. 108). Finally, like contemporary anthropology, Marx emphasized holism and a synthesis of arts and sciences (pp. 51–52, 65). Yet, while these and similar arguments appear compelling, upon examination, one realizes that, given the continuous influence of Marxian thought on the development of anthropology, the correspondence between Marxian ideas and the direction anthropology has taken in the last century is less than remarkable.

The direct influence of Marx on the development of anthropology both in North America and European tradition is well known and easy to demonstrate. One only has to consider neo-evolutionary thinkers, such as Leslie A. White and Julian Steward in North America, neo-liberal Marxist and feminist anthropologists of the 1960s and 1970s on the same continent, or the Marxist leanings of French anthropologists and intellectuals with considerable influence on anthropology—Louis Althusser, Claude Meilasseaux, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Michel Foucault, and Pierre Bourdieu—to realize that the correspondence between Marxian and anthropological interests is more predetermined than coincidental. The influence of Marxian ideas on the development of anthropology makes arguments by Patterson that the work of these philosophers and anthropologists—for instance that of Bourdieu (p. 167)—would intrigue Marx seem circular.

Even where there is no direct influence, as in much of pre-World War II British social anthropology and early North American cultural anthropology, anthropology and Marxian thought were based on a common intellectual tradition. British social anthropology was influenced by Durkheim, whose ideas, like those of Marx (as Patterson so persuasively demonstrates in the first part of the book), were in turn developed on Enlightenment thought. Similarly, North American cultural anthropology was founded on the German intellectual tradition to which Marx was also indebted. Though Marx may have been less influenced by Kant and Herder than by Hegel and Enlightenment thinkers, several of his ideas overlap with those of both Kant and Herder. For instance, he shared Kant's conviction of the importance of praxis, that the human character can only be known through the study of human actions (pp. 25–26, 60). Similarly, Marx's appreciation of variation was akin to that of Herder and even to that of Geertz. According to Patterson, “It was impossible in his view to speak of



either nature or society in general or in some abstract sense; it was necessary instead to think of the spatial and temporal peculiarities of both" (p. 52; see also pp. 28, 31, 47; Geertz, 1973).

In evaluating Patterson's claim on Marx, one ought to also consider that nineteenth-century thinkers were generalists. Undoubtedly, Marx was interested in questions which have since been developed by anthropologists. Yet not only anthropologists, but representatives of several other fields, such as history, philosophy, economics, or political science, could argue that he was one of their own with equal justification. In fact, there are indications that what has become the strength of anthropological research in the twentieth century represented the weakest aspect of the Marxian body of work. Though interested in all aspects of human societies, anthropology's greatest contribution as an academic discipline in the past hundred years has arguably been to the study of small-scale contemporary and prehistoric societies, which were only of instrumental secondary interests to Marx and Engels, whose primary goal was to understand the development of capitalist societies and their various forms around the world (pp. 92, 106). Even more importantly, Marx and Engels's speculations about the type of societies which have been at the center of anthropological interest in the past century were based on extremely limited data (*ibid.*, p. 65). This in turn has implications both for Patterson's reasoning in *Karl Marx, Anthropologist*, and for anthropological theories.

In the book, Patterson not only presents useful summaries of Marxian thought and links these to contemporary advancement in corresponding areas in anthropology, but, at the end of each chapter, he also speculates on how Marx would have perceived these developments and interpreted anthropological research that has taken place since his time (pp. 75, 93). This exercise is futile. Marx's theories were what they were because of the nature and amount of data available to him and to everyone else in the second part of the nineteenth century. In the light of Marx's intellectual rigor and respect for evidence, which Patterson so excellently elucidates in his book, it is reasonable to assume that, had the data collected by anthropologists since his death been available to him, his theories would have been different. Thus, there is no reason to believe that he would have approached the data accumulated by twentieth-century anthropology with the mind frame he had developed on the back of nineteenth-century evidence.

This realization has an additional implication. As a result of limited available data, in Marxian theories of tool use, evolution of human production and social institutions, and "primitive communism," missing evidence is often supplemented by imagination, just-so stories, and wishful thinking, often resulting in unfounded assumptions, which, however, as Patterson rightly points out, continue to influence anthropological thinking on these subjects. Thus, apart from providing a useful review of parallels between Marxian thought and contemporary anthropology, one of the most important, and perhaps inadvertent, contributions of Patterson's latest book is that it alerts anthropologists to the need and possibility to revise, develop, and correct Marxian misconceptions of contemporary and prehistoric small-scale societies.

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### **Response to Csilla Dallos's Review of *Karl Marx, Anthropologist***

I am always pleased when readers find something I write useful but do not expect them to agree necessarily with everything I have said. In the same vein, I do not necessarily agree with everything I read about what reviewers write about my work. Here are some points of difference—differences that may be matters of emphasis, on the one hand, or more substantial, on the other. First, I think the reviewer underestimates the depth and extent of anti-socialist thought from the 1870s onward, of which the Cold War is but one facet, and the stifling effects this had had and continues to have in both the West and the former socialist states. One effect is that we read commentaries on Marx, or Geertz for that matter, rather than what was actually written; this is sad. Second, I find the reviewer's assertion that "anthropology's greatest contribution . . . has arguably been to the study of small-scale contemporary and prehistoric societies" debatable. The contribution of anthropology might be viewed in terms of the impact of capitalist expansion, the emergence of diverse forms of social inequality and state-based societies, and resistance to those processes at home and abroad. Such a reconceptualization of the field potentially provides alternatives to concepts, like "prehistoric," that are not especially useful; facilitates communication between practitioners with different research interests who may talk too infrequently with one another; and does not fall into the trap of viewing the people with whom anthropologists work as all that different from themselves. Third, I agree with the reviewer that all of us should continually tack back and forth between empirical evidence and the analytical frameworks we use in order "to revise, develop, and correct . . . misconceptions"; however, I would not limit the practice of honing and refining arguments to just the theories sketched by Marx more than a century ago. I would also extend it to the works of contemporary writers who theorize, for example, neoliberalism or globalization in order to see how what they suggest actually or potentially impacts the people with whom I work and among whom I live.

THOMAS C. PATTERSON

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