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Scull, A. *Madness in Civilization: A Cultural History of Insanity from the Bible to Freud, from the Madhouse to Modern Medicine*. London: Thames & Hudson. 2015. 448pp £28.00 (pbk) ISBN 978-0-500-25212-3

Andrew Scull has been one of the foremost historians of medicine for decades and, in *Madness in Civilization*, that considerable experience has been used to produce a text aimed at the undergraduate, or perhaps general, market. As the subtitle suggests, Scull considers the *longue durée* of madness – beginning in the bible and ancient Palestine before travelling through the imperial courts of Han Dynasty China, the battles of Odysseus, the corridors of Bedlam, the Viennese drawing room of Freud, and ending in the DSM-5 and the pharmacology laboratories of modern America. A long journey through the diverse ‘geographies of madness’, as Scull nicely phrases it. Taking in literary and artistic – as well as scientific – material, Scull describes the different forms that madness was believed to take in these sites, as well as the causes, cures, and societal judgements imparted upon the suffering.

For those considering the use of *Madness* as an undergraduate textbook, the above structure is, broadly, what one would expect from an introductory text on the history of madness. Accordingly, prospective convenors are probably as concerned with presentation, weighting, and stance as they are with the presence of these topics. In terms of presentation, *Madness* is a lovely thing, reasonably priced, and with hundreds of illustrations, including numerous colour inlays. Scull writes clearly, with a dry wit, and one would hope that undergraduates would be able to negotiate the book with ease. In terms of weighting, and despite excursions, the book is oriented towards modernity, northern Europe, and North America. In the opening chapters, this focus is unsurprising given the paucity of primary material from the ancient world but, given the vast range of scholarship considering mental health in a contemporary global context, it is more disappointing to see at the conclusion. In terms of stance, Scull’s authorial voice becomes stronger the closer we get to the contemporary moment and there is an overtly critical approach taken to the medical-industrial complex with Scull noting that, exceptions like syphilis aside, ‘handing over madness to the ministrations of medics’ is ‘a bet we have yet to collect’ (p. 15). Perhaps it is simply assumed, *a priori*, that Claudius Galen was wrong whereas the same conclusion cannot be assumed of psychopharmacology? Whatever the reason, the intervention is neither unwarranted nor unwelcome and, if anything, should make these chapters more appealing to sociologists.

For those reading *Madness* with a degree of familiarity of the field, the huge, polo-neck wearing, elephant in the room is of course Michel Foucault. Not only is there a chapter called ‘The Great Confinement’. Not only is there extensive use of that most-Foucauldian of words ‘unreason’. Not only is there an inlay of Bosch’s *Ship of Fools*. But the entire book is called *Madness in Civilization!* And, despite this, Foucault is mentioned in passing on only three occasions – once to say his reading of Bosch’s aforementioned painting is incorrect, once to drag the great confinement forward a bit, and once to suggest that Foucault’s articulation of ‘moral treatment as moral imprisonment’ expressed a ‘kernel of truth’ (p. 207). While Scull has made his views on Foucault perfectly clear elsewhere (Scull 1990; Scull 2007), the continual sideways glance offered here is, in my view, rather strange. I am not sure what any of this achieves but, given that Foucault is so present here, I’ll offer just two observations.

Firstly, Scull continually represents his disagreements with Foucault as concerning matters of fact whereas they seem to agree, substantively although certainly not entirely, on almost every point of significance. What is at stake here is predominantly conceptual. So, for example, Scull shows little interest in differentiating between a person-who-does-mad-things and a mad-person whereas this would be a foundational distinction for Foucault. Likewise, when Scull says madness is *in* civilization, he is referring to conditions like melancholia which are demonstrably not Foucault’s primary concern. These are substantive differences and Scull is not wrong in either example, but the matter cannot simply be settled by returning the archives.

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Secondly, Scull has previously split the world into ‘conventional historians’ and a ‘Foucauldian cult’ (Scull 1990: 58) and while there are sound reasons to be wary of Foucault’s histories, others allied to his cult have produced undoubtedly fine, empirically-sound work. It is quite simply the conventional historian’s loss to have a dozen or more pages devoted to shellshock and post-traumatic stress disorder and to not consider either Ian Hacking or Allan Young. It is, however, unlikely that much of this will matter for the undergraduate or general reader and, frankly, it is a shame that it matters for anyone for Foucault’s spectre does little more here than distract from the achievements elsewhere in the book.

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### **References**

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