

Book Reviews

ERNA LESKY (editor), *A system of complete medical police. Selections from Johann Peter Frank*, Baltimore, Md., and London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976, 8vo, pp. xxiii, 469, £24.00.

J. P. Frank (1745–1821) of Vienna is renowned for his 6,262 page *System einer vollstandigen medicinischen Polizey*. It has never been translated into English and this is the first extensive selection from it in translation. It is intended for the physician, medical historian, social worker, historian, sociologist, and cultural historian. Those of us who have tried to read Frank's German will be especially grateful to the translators, and also to Professor Lesky for her excellent 'Introduction'. She must also be congratulated on the selections she has made from such a voluminous work. Together they give a very fair impression of the whole treatise and present Frank's main lines of thought and the problems of the eighteenth century that he was attempting to combat. The editor also aims to demonstrate the philanthropic mood of his time and problems of population, as well as Frank's liberal attitude to social problems.

Professor Lesky has once more placed us in her debt by producing an important contribution to the history of medicine, and it is, therefore, a pity that only a limited number may benefit from it in view of the very high price.

DAVID C. LINDBERG, *Theories of vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1976, 8vo, pp. xii, 324, illus., £13.60.

In the medieval period and the renaissance, optics was one of the most highly developed scientific disciplines and the author claims that theories of vision were central to it. After a background introduction he traces the contributions to this field of Islamic scholars such as Al-Kindi, Hunain ibn Ishaq, Avicenna, Averroes, and Alhazen (965–1039), the most important of them all, and then the origins of optics in the West. Representative of the latter are, amongst others, Grosseteste, Bacon, Pecham, Witelo, the Western followers of Alhazen called the Perspectivists, Leonardo da Vinci, and finally Kepler, in the seventeenth century, who solved the problem of vision theoretically. Professor Lindberg concentrates on the works of Alhazen and Kepler because of their great significance and he places them accurately in historical perspective. Very wisely he has excluded psychology and epistemology which were never of central concern, and to tackle them would have jeopardized his project. He therefore concentrates on the mathematics, physics, and physiology of visual theory and his book is a comprehensive and lucid account of an important aspect of the history of physiology. There are nearly one hundred pages of notes and bibliography and much of the text is based on primary sources. It is worthy of wide circulation.

DON R. BROTHWELL (editor), *Beyond aesthetics. Investigations into the nature of visual art*, London, Thames & Hudson, 1976, 8vo, pp. 212, illus., £9.50.

There are additional ways of looking at art other than from the purely artistic and aesthetic points of view, and the twelve essays in this book examine these less explored avenues. Being a product of human behaviour visual art has a link with the evolution of man, as an aspect of human ethology and as part of the cultural needs of a community. Thus the authors of the collection include the anthropologist, the biologist, the ophthalmologist, and the sociologist, and they provide information about artists,