

Book reviews

Daniel Hell:
Lob der Scham

Buchreihe: Sachbuch Psychosozial.
Giessen: Psychosozial-Verlag; 2018.
248 Seiten.
Preis: 24,90 Euro.
ISBN-13: 978-3-8379-2810-5.



In der «Neuen Zürcher Zeitung» vom 3. Juli 2021 wird ein «Lob der Scham» gesungen, von einem Philosophieprofessor aus Graz. Er spricht der «seelischen Einkehr in das Geschehene» das Wort und zitiert Theodor Heuss: «Und dies ist unsere Scham, dass sich solches im Raume der Volksgeschichte vollzog, aus der Lessing und Kant, Goethe und Schiller in das Weltbewusstsein traten. Diese Scham nimmt uns niemand, niemand ab». Der Autor fährt weiter unten fort: «Es scheint für das Verständnis der Humanisierung mitmenschlicher Verhältnisse nicht unwesentlich, ob die Befähigung zur Scham als zivilisatorischer Antrieb eine Rolle spielt. Denn mit dieser Befähigung geht einher die Neigung zur solidarischen Öffnung, hin auf fremde, unser ererbtes Misstrauen weckende Lebensformen.» In der Scham bleibt die Schuld dem Erleben gegenwärtig. Der kurze kulturkritische Aufsatz des «alten weisen Mannes» zielt auf ein Genaunehmen der (historischen) Realität ab, das unter der «political correctness» zugrunde gehen könnte. Nun ist hier ein Buch anzuzeigen, das der genauen Beschreibung unserer Gefühlszustände dient und die Scham zum Thema macht. Der Titel «Lob der Scham» ist ja (wie auch im erwähnten Zeitungsartikel) eine Anspielung auf das «Lob der Dummheit» des Erasmus von Rotterdam. Dieser schrieb aber ironisch über

die «Vorteile» der Dummheit. Unserem Autor ist es aber ernst: Wer sich schämt, stellt sich selbst in Frage. Er verhält sich, als habe er etwas zu verbergen. Das heisst aber nicht zwingend, dass Scham nur hinderlich ist und keine wichtige Aufgabe im Leben erfüllt (S. 7). Daniel Hell hat sein Buch über die Scham von 2018 aktualisiert und erweitert, und, wie mir beim genauen Nachprüfen der Unterschiede in «Einleitung und Übersicht» aufgefallen ist, erheblich umformuliert. Die neue Version richtet sich sogar nicht mehr an dasselbe Publikum wie die erste, sondern an ein breiteres, weniger fachlich informiertes. So fragt er: «Wie kann man (...) Scham loben, wie es der Buchtitel tut? Und wie kann man – wie es im Untertitel heisst – Scham mit Selbstachtung in Zusammenhang bringen, wenn dieses Gefühl so schändlich ist und mit einer Krise der Selbstachtung einhergeht? Scham ist doch als «negative Emotion» möglichst zu vermeiden ...» (S. 7). In der ersten Auflage waren die Formulierungen kürzer und setzten mehr voraus als jetzt. (Das «Wesentliche der Scham ist damit nicht erfasst», hiess es da lapidar.)

Im zweiten der neun Kapitel präsentiert Daniel Hell die Themen, die in den folgenden Kapiteln wieder aufgenommen, ergänzt und vertieft werden. Dabei greift er auf seine grosse Erfahrung als psychoanalytischer Therapeut, universitärer Lehrer und Klinikchef zurück und präsentiert den Stoff gekonnt in all seinen Facetten. In der Schlussfolgerung des dritten Kapitels steht: «Scham brennt». Wer sich schämt, spürt sich intensiv, und zwar gerade dann, wenn seine Selbstachtung einzubrechen droht. Er ringt mit sich selbst. Hell grenzt das Phänomen der Scham vom Narzissmus ab. Beim Narzissmus herrscht aber Spaltung und Projektion vor (könnte man in der Fachsprache, die Hell möglichst vermeidet, abgekürzt sagen), während in der Scham das Realisieren der eigenen Unvollkommenheit mehr Gewicht hat.

Im Gegensatz zur Dummheit, die Erasmus lobt, ist das Lob der Scham wirklich am Platz. Scham und Schuldgefühl werden sorgfältig unterschieden (S. 110 f.) und die neurobiologischen Befunde (S. 112 f.) diskutiert. Scham als Seismograph des «Selbst» fördert nicht, sondern hemmt Narzissmus (S. 113). Auf die zwiespältige Struktur der Scham und vieles andere kann hier nicht eingegangen werden, obwohl alle angesprochenen Gesichtspunkte einschliesslich philosophischer Erörterungen (Scheler, Sartre, S. 119 ff., Anders S. 240 f.) die Wichtigkeit des Themas beweisen. Hell ergänzt die eigenen Fallvignetten durch beson-

ders eindruckliche von Leon Wurmser und anderen Autoren (S. 124 ff.).

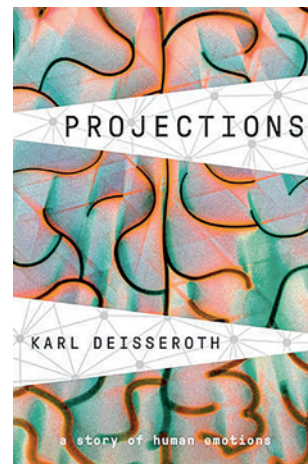
Wie schon angetönt, geht das Buch weit über ein psychiatrisches Fachbuch hinaus, was nicht nur für die Fachkolleg:innen ein Gewinn ist. Der Abschnitt «Schamangst: Das Geschäft (...)» (S. 237 ff.) bringt eine aktuelle Kulturkritik (Riesman, Lyotard S. 237), ebenso wie schon der vorhergehende («Burnout» S. 233 und «Soziale Scham» S. 213) und das ganze neunte Kapitel auch.

Das Buch ist allen zu empfehlen. Und es lohnt sich auf alle Fälle, die dazu nötige Geduld und Ausdauer aufzubringen.

Thomas von Salis

Karl Deisseroth:
Projections. A story of human emotions

Gütersloh: Random House; 2021.
256 Seiten.
Price: 35,90 CHF.
ISBN: 978-1-984853-69-1.



The author is a professor of Bioengineering, Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University in California. Karl Deisseroth is well known as a neuroscientist for applying optical and genetic strategies, in short optogenetics, to study neural circuit functions in neurological and psychiatric disorders. But he is also a clinical psychiatrist caring for patients. It is through the lens of this dual perspective, as a clinician and scientist, that the author describes a fascinating journey in the

inner world of the mind, mixing neuroscience and deeply moving patient histories. The bewildering intensity of emergency psychiatry provides the context for the patients' stories. We should not expect a text book approach; on the contrary, the author uses first-person accounts, covering a wide range of different mental disorders. Along with patients suffering from eating disorders, he discusses cases of depression, mania, autism, borderline personality disorder, dementia and schizophrenia. Deisseroth is at his best when he connects psychiatric disorders with knowledge from modern neuroscience. However, he makes clear that he values literature as much as science in thinking about the mind. For him ideas from literature are important for understanding patients and he illustrates the descriptions of clinical cases with quotes from writers as diverse as Ovid or Tony Morrison. Deisseroth has an uncanny ability to connect neuroscientific knowledge with human stories, avoiding any dogmatism. Describing depression in a patient, he dwells on the anatomy of the deep brain structures associated with negative valence and considers the evolutionary aspects of cranial nerves responsible for the expression of emotions. In a chapter called *Broken Skin*, Deisseroth reminds us that skin and brain both arise from ectoderm, our initial boundary, crafting a fundamental borderline between self and non-self. One cannot avoid thinking about Didier Anzieu's work about the skin-ego, the envelope on which the feeling of well-being is based. We carry a narrative in our minds explaining ourselves and others, thus helping to maintain our sense of identity. The story of a patient – suffering from a borderline personality disorder – serves as a skilful demonstration of how early-life stress may lead to emotional dysregulation, impairing the building of a sound self. A case of multi-infarct dementia serves to illustrate how much memory depends on feelings: "There may be little justification to store and recall memory of an experience, unless the experience matters enough to elicit a feeling". This statement serves to explain why cognitive decline goes together with increased anhedonia. In a final chapter, the author muses on where ongoing neuroscientific developments will lead us, but this is of course a story that has not yet been written. This is a fascinating book for anyone interested in neuroscience and disorders of the brain.

Andreas Steck

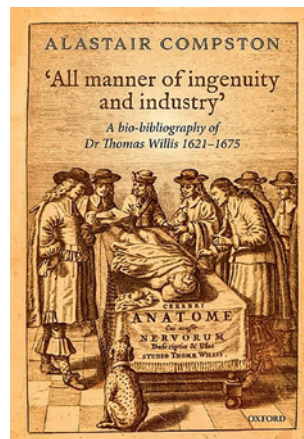
Alastair Compston:
"All manner of ingenuity and industry"
A bio-bibliography of Thomas Willis
1621–1675

Oxford: University Press; 2021.

824 pages.

Price: 130 USD.

ISBN: 978-0-198795-39-1.



On the title page of *Cerebri Anatome* is a group of associates of Thomas Willis, including famous architect Christopher Wren. They were involved in dissections, removal and fixation of brains for study, description, and illustration. Willis acknowledged the help of Lower and Wren in his preface to that book.

Alastair Compston is professor emeritus of neurology of the University of Cambridge, former President of the European Neurological Society and of the Association of British Neurologists, and Editor of *Brain*, which under his editorship until 2013, especially because of his editorials and "From the Archives" articles, was clearly the most interesting journal of neurology. He also served on the International Advisory Board of our Swiss Archives of Neurology, Psychiatry and Psychotherapy for many years and gave an Invited Lecture at the centenary celebrations of our Swiss Neurological Society in Montreux in 2009. Apart from his research on the clinical science of human demyelinating disease, which has been awarded several international prizes, he has a long-standing interest in antiquarian books. His main activity in retirement is writing on the history of medicine. His new monumental work is a masterpiece, deserving the title on its own which he has given as a quote: "All manner of ingenuity and industry"; – A bio-bibliography of Thomas Willis 1621–1675".

This is a first "copy-specific bibliography of printed works of Thomas Willis produced 1659–1721" based on the author's personal collection of 103 copies of original editions and issues. More than 160 figures with detailed descriptions of printers' ornaments provide visual evidence for the novelty of the writing and the ways in which books at that time were decorated and made attractive to the reader. All fourteen treatises by Thomas Willis are discussed in depth on the basis of the original English translations, and some texts, first printed in Latin, are newly translated. "These contributions are recognized as wise, original and influential."

As readers, we are invited to reading in this "book about books: those written by Thomas Willis and those that were informed or influenced by his works. It celebrates the quarter-centenary of his birth on 27 January 1621" with the dedication: "Too the many nameless artisans who produced the books described therein and those who, at one time or another, have turned their pages."

The eighteen chapters of this monumental work are organised in four sections. Each chapter is introduced by a quote from one of Willis' works thus making a very attractive invitation for reading. Chapter 1: "In the tents of the King as well as the Muses" gives an overview of the life and the (sometimes fragile) reputation of Thomas Willis, with many carefully researched details on his personal life, relevant aspects of society of that time in general, and of medicine and neurology in particular. A wealth of information! This chapter also describes in depth and very knowledgeably the societal and political circumstances in which he lived and how he developed his thinking and practising which led to valuable and long-lasting contributions to modern medicine, and to neurology in particular. His work in the 1650s provides an example of rural medical practice in early modern England. It is Willis who coined the term "neurologie – the doctrine of the nerves". His contributions to clinical neuroscience are many: the anatomy and structure of the nervous system with everlasting beautiful illustrations, probably executed by his colleague at the Oxford Philosophical Club, Christopher Wren, who is better known as the architect of St Paul's Cathedral in London, the Bodleian Library at Oxford and other famous buildings. Then there is Willis' extensive work on clinical neuroscience with detailed case descriptions illustrating his treatises (p. 24), and "For the Crown of the work a certain theory of the Soul of the Brutes should be added" – what nowadays would probably be called: neuro-psychiatric borderland.

In chapter 2: “Setting down experiments of the sciences: printing and the works of Thomas Willis” aspects of the history of book printing and illustrations relevant to Willis’ printed works are described in detail (after the author very modestly has confessed to being “only an amateur in bibliography” – one cannot imagine how a non-amateur would be able to go into more detail or to describe the topics in more beautiful language...): watermarks, signatures, catchwords and pagination techniques; cancelled leaves, printing errors; binding techniques by printers and booksellers; We can (try to) follow erudite discussions on illustrations, for example as to who might probably be the illustrator when styles of images are different, some being more artistic, others more schematic. Comparison with other texts on similar topics from that time, make it clear that plagiarism was widespread, texts and particularly illustrations were “shamelessly borrowed”. Such practices, however, can only be discovered and detected by a scholar such as the author who so diligently follows all signs and comes to carefully designed conclusions and interpretations. In Chapter 3 “To delineate with most skillful hands” illustrations that are clearly reproduced and described in scholarly manner (e.g., decorated title pages, p. 126; engraved frontispieces, p. 129; portraits, p. 133; head and tail pieces, p. 140; decorated initials p. 155; engraved plates p. 185). Chapter 4: “The mystery and school house of nature” provides an overview of the printed works of Thomas Willis and deals in detail with his extensive and varied bibliography. It is encyclopedic in scope, and the accompanying analysis provides an excellent commentary and analysis of Willis’ achievements.

Between 1659 and 1675, Willis published fourteen treatises. These appeared in six pub-

lished works, one in two parts, written in Latin. Four of the titles contain engraved plates depicting the brain, muscle, lungs and stomach. These treatises are described and commented on in the following chapters with admirable knowledge and with many interesting details:

5: *Diatribae duae medico-philosophicae* – “Those first forgotten particles” (the first book by Willis at age 38)

6: *Cerebri anatome* – “Addicted to the opening of heads”

7: *Pathologiae cerebri* – “A certain physiologie and pathology of the brain and nervous stock”

8: *Affectionum quae dicuntur hystericarum & hypochondriacarum* – “An Iliad of evils in the head”

9: *De anima brutorum* – “To understand all things but itself”

10: *Pharmaceutice rationalis* – “The happy curing of cephalic diseases”

11: A plain and easie method for preserving those that are well from the plague (in English) – “To be avoided as if they were sick”

12: *Opera omnia* “The whole dowry of all nature”

13: Dr Willis’s practice of physick “Satisfying a mind desirous of truth”

14: The London practice of physick “Of drudgery in pursuit of lucre”

chapters 15–18 summarise the content of Willis’s works and their contribution to medical science:

15: medical chemistry and disease – “The hearths and altars for the vital fire” 16: the brain and nervous stock – “Neurologie: the doctrine of the nerves”

17: the discourse of the soul – “A great and difficult thing, and full of hazards”:

18: rational therapeutics “To practice medicine with a safe conscience”:

By reading these extensive chapters it becomes apparent why Willis is considered to have been “central to the move from classical scholasticism to accounts of anatomy and physiology based on observation and experiment.” The comments and interpretations of the surviving records of his lectures from the 1660s provide “an example of pedagogy in medicine at that time.”

Alastair Compston’s book on Thomas Willis is a masterpiece, a great work of superb scholarship, thoughtful consideration and interpretation of knowledge on the development of modern medicine and of neurology in particular, of the printing trade at the time, etc. The architecture of the work is so convincingly crafted and impressive, the style is very much inviting for reading and reflecting, the references are detailed in the accompanying footnotes, the illustrations are clearly reproduced and thoughtfully commented upon. The Oxford University Press must also be congratulated for producing such a marvellous work, a very rich mine of treasures. And as it is a rule with every wonderful Persian carpet there must be a minimal fault or omission in order just to demonstrate that perfect perfection may only belong to another dimension: I only could find and detect one single word missing: in the Acknowledgements (unpaginated) on line 5 there is missing: “mine”...

Those who prefer a shorter version of this book may be referred to a lecture by the author on (parts of) that topic: Prof. Alastair Compston – “Dr Thomas Willis’s Works” History of Medical Sciences Project (ox.ac.uk)

Jürg Kesselring