encounters a range of historical topics, such as family relationships, medicine and health, death and bereavement, entertainment and leisure, religion and spirituality, and the hazards of travel. Elizabeth Denman's delight in choosing a 'Pedlar Doll' for her little niece Maria Brodie (pp. 99, 100, 105), her 'perplexity' and worry about her granddaughter Fanny, who was about to 'bring forth her first born [child] in a foreign land, far away from her husband' (p. 103), and her descriptions of the 'gayeties of the Chimney Sweepers' during the May Day celebrations of 1832 (p. 92), are just a few of many intriguing glimpses provided by the primary sources. The book would be especially useful to medical historians, since some of the main characters were eminent physicians or surgeons, including Thomas Denman, his sons-in-law Richard Croft (1762–1818) and Matthew Baillie (1761–1823), and his nephew, Sir Benjamin Brodie (1783–1862). Elizabeth Denman frequently refers to her own health and the illnesses of her relatives and friends in her diary. For example, in 1825 she was 'seized with sickness at dinner', and 'did everything that I was ordered' by the doctors, but still she had 'a very restless night' and 'felt so weak and feeble in the morning, that I could not venture to leave my room the whole day' (p. 80).

While the book would be useful to historians, it is not actually clear whether this was in fact the editor's aim. The narrative style, and absence of critical analysis or argument in her commentary, indicates that it may be intended for the interested public rather than for the professional historian. If the book *is* aimed at historians, it could be improved in various ways. Firstly, the Introduction could be restructured and expanded so that it contains sections on the book's aims and structure; the nature and limitations of the sources; the key historical issues and themes that emerge in the primary sources; and the social, cultural, medical, and economic context. Secondly, it would be useful if the editorial comment were distinguished more clearly from the primary source extracts in its format, since at the moment it is not immediately obvious where the editor's voice ends and the primary sources begin. Thirdly, the Index could be organised by theme or subject as well as by name, so that historians could more easily locate the information they require. Finally, the editor might like to consider including a short conclusion to draw out some of the main themes which arise in the primary sources, and to evaluate what these reveal about the emotional character of family relationships in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. But even without these alterations, the book will be appreciated by the historical community for its rare and intimate insights into the lives of three very interesting families.

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Grégoire Chamayou, *Les Corps Vils: Expérimenter sur les êtres Humains aux XVIIIe et XIXe Siècles*, Les empecheurs de penser en rond (Paris: La Découverte, 2008), pp. 423, €24.50, paperback, ISBN: 978-2-7071-5646-4.

Grégoire Chamayou's historical–conceptual study of experimentation on human beings in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries focuses on the category of 'vile bodies', as in the expression *experimentum in corpore vili*. Vile bodies are categories of experimental subjects who have been judged to be 'beyond the pale' and thus can be used at the experimenter's will. Chief amongst these are criminals condemned to capital punishment: we learn of the raft of Enlightenment arguments justifying the worst forms of experimentation on such prisoners, because they owe a moral debt to society, or because of variations on a utilitarian calculus.

Maupertuis devoted an entire section of his *Lettre sur le progrès des sciences* to the 'usefulness' of experiments on criminals. He had the decency to suggest that if the criminal survives the experiments, he should be pardoned, since he has by a basic calculus

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0025727300005895 Published online by Cambridge University Press

done his part of the bargain. The criminal has to consent to this of his own free will. This kind of calculation – which even Diderot subscribed to, as can be seen in the article 'Anatomie' of the *Encyclopédie* – is still less chilling than Fichte's entirely formal definition by which a criminal who has been condemned to capital punishment is already a non-person. Chamayou quotes Fichte explaining that once a death sentence has been pronounced on a criminal, he is *bürgerlich tot*, 'dead from a civil standpoint', hence anything that is done to the physical body of the individual does not concern his civil status any longer, including his rights (p. 89). Yet Maupertuis, too, recommends we 'not be moved by the air of cruelty we might think to find here: a man is nothing compared to the human species; a criminal is even less than nothing' (p. 81).

Other categories of people who were considered legitimate for experimentation, moving into the second half of the nineteenth century, were the mentally ill and severely retarded, and prostitutes (particularly for inoculation experiments with syphilis). Chamayou quotes one disturbing – and disturbingly illogical – response by a prominent syphilis researcher in Paris, Dr Auzias-Turenne, to an official inquiry in 1853 into whether he could be allowed to inoculate syphilis to a group of prostitutes held at the St Lazare prison. Partly anticipating the notion of consent and treading on it at the same time, Auzias-Turenne explains that the prostitutes must agree to the experiments 'of their own free will *and be subjected to mine* [ie. his own will]' (p. 287).

This is a heavily Foucaldian work, filled with both the familiar jargon of that school and some of its own, such as the 'cognitive surplus value' (p. 179) which is extracted from the bodies of the prisoners. This sounds more Marxist, and indeed Chamayou often refers approvingly to Marx, who himself called attention to the expression *corpore vili*. Perhaps this marks the difference between Chamayou's treatment of human experimentation and other, more scholarly treatments, such as those by Anita Guerrini or Andreas-Holger Maehle – his more explicitly political approach. Indeed, Chamayou suggests that the problem does not reduce to a duality of the 'purely scientific' versus 'ethical' considerations: as is clear in the cases of colonial, racialised medicine (discussed in the last chapters), or the use of prisoners and prostitutes, there is a dimension of *power* and subjection which is unavoidable in this story. At the same time, as he moves away from the Enlightenment and its aporias toward nineteenth-century experimental subjects, such as soldiers or individuals with wounds which have revealed an organ enabling exceptional *in vivo* experiments, Chamayou loses some of his theoretical momentum. Rather than extending the analysis all the way until the early twentieth century, it might have been useful to have included even a brief discussion of human experimentation *before* the early modern period, so we would have a better sense of whether or not the Enlightenment constitutes a 'break'.

Les corps vils is nicely illustrated (I recommend the reproduction of Hogarth's *Four Stages of Cruelty*), elegantly written, if sometimes too enamoured of its own phraseology, and clearly and consistently argued, especially in the political sense mentioned above. It contains numerous vivid quotations from primary sources, often unknown. We can learn a lot about human experimentation in Enlightenment philosophy and medicine (chiefly French, but also German) from this book.

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Marc J. Ratcliff, *The Quest for the Invisible: Microscopy in the Enlightenment* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. xvi + 315, £60.00/$124.95, hardback, ISBN: 978-0-7546-6150-4.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0025727300005895 Published online by Cambridge University Press