

Capuchin experiences of African cultures and environments. With a capacious definition of collecting and collections, *Collecting across Cultures* is therefore able to reframe discussions of the display and study of exotic artefacts within an innovative media history of cross-cultural contact.

Yet often these reconstructions of the trajectories and histories of collections also signal the limits of European understandings of the cultures from which objects and information were plucked. This is articulated most clearly in the chapter by Paz Cabello Carro that describes frequent and informal exchanges between Spanish explorers and native peoples of the Pacific Northwest and the various archival misclassifications that, in one case, attributed a Peruvian origin to Nuu-chah-nulth artefacts. Rather than simply mediating the encounter with new worlds, then, many of these essays therefore suggest that these objects became under- or undetermined raw materials with which European collectors assembled a vision of the wider world. As Bleichmar reminds us in her contribution, judging the veracity of early modern collectors is not the goal of these essays. Yet with a few noticeable exceptions – Peter Mancall’s discussion of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) or Lisa Trever and Joanne Pillsbury’s essay on a Peruvian bishop whose ordering of American plants and animals was heavily influenced by local indigenous cultures, for example – these collected essays shy away from discussions of how these objects (or the peoples they came from) influenced European conceptions of the non-European world and seem pessimistic about the possibility of recovering the alternative forms of knowledge embedded within them.

If the title of this text ultimately undersells the geographic and temporal diversity of these essays, it may therefore nonetheless oversell the extent to which it actually discusses *Collecting across Cultures*. In spite of confident assertions about the collections of Iroquoian peoples and African princes in the introduction, for example, it is only in Sarah Benson’s attempt to re-create Siamese collections of French objects that the other side of early modern encounters is probed in any real depth. While Trever and Pillsbury’s chapter discusses a specific colonial collection, the focus otherwise remains trained on Europe and on European collectors who, wherever they travelled, ultimately assembled their collections there. This is likely a product of the archives on which these essays draw – surviving collections of artefacts still housed throughout Europe – but there seems to be little explicit recognition of these limitations or any sustained discussion of how they might be overcome.

While the same centripetal and centrifugal forces at work in any edited collection – a tension between providing an introduction to a diverse and sophisticated field and providing evidence of a coherent vision or theme – can be noticed here, this is an excellent and much-needed book. In tracing out the Atlantic and global histories of collections and cabinets of curiosity, *Collecting across Cultures* offers a sophisticated new approach to revisit and enrich histories of how Europe encountered and ultimately came to understand the wider world.

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PETER R. ANSTEY, *John Locke and Natural Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. xii + 252. ISBN 978-0-19-958977-7. £35.00 (hardback).
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While Locke’s relationship to the natural-philosophical endeavours of his time has previously been subject to academic scrutiny, it arguably has never received such a painstaking and well-structured examination as in Peter Anstey’s masterful *John Locke and Natural Philosophy*. In fact, what makes this such an excellent study is Anstey’s exacting attention to the details of Locke’s writings, including the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and his medical and chymical works. Having spent quite a number of years co-editing Locke’s writings on natural

philosophy and medicine for the Clarendon edition of Locke's *Works*, Anstey is extremely conversant with the material. Indeed, the long gestation of this self-described 'commentary' (p. ix) is evident in his close attention to the nuances of the texts themselves. While he adeptly contextualizes Locke's natural-philosophical ideas, Anstey never strays too far from the texts; given the plethora of already extant studies concerned with this subject, this is a good thing, as *John Locke and Natural Philosophy* provides both well-needed clarification and fresh insights. As a result, Anstey cuts through what has become something of a Gordian knot of contradictory evidence and opinion, and in so doing provides us with as clear a picture as can reasonably be hoped for.

John Locke and Natural Philosophy consists of four central theses: foremost, that Locke emphasized the utility of experimental philosophy and was pessimistic regarding speculative systems; second, that Locke believed a truly demonstrative natural philosophy was beyond our cognitive grasp; third, that Locke, despite his criticisms, did engage in speculative natural philosophy, e.g. chymistry; and lastly, that Locke changed his views regarding natural philosophy after the publication of Newton's mathematical method in the *Principia*. While each thesis is, in turn, well argued, it seems to me as though Anstey's most forceful is the first, namely Locke's commitment to experimental philosophy. A considerable number of chapters are dedicated to demonstrating – against the positivist placement of Locke as a precursor to the hypothetico-deductive method – that Locke championed a (quasi-Baconian) experimental philosophy that was not far removed from the ambit of the Royal Society. Indeed, Anstey illustrates how Locke believed that the most suitable method, given our cognitive limits, was the practice of natural history. Locke's indebtedness to the natural-historical method of Francis Bacon and Robert Boyle – and, perhaps most surprisingly, his interest in seventeenth-century travel literature – is consequently offered as a means to elucidate the intellectual station of the *Essay*.

Anstey thus situates the *Essay* within the context of the seventeenth century's natural-philosophical obsession with the epistemic limits of the mind. Locke, he makes clear, found intellectual coherence amongst his four 'Master-Builders' – Boyle, Sydenham, Huygens and Newton – precisely on account of their adherence to and practice of the experimental philosophy. The experimental philosophy provided members of the early Royal Society with what they believed to be the only means of securing the verity of knowledge about the natural world, and this is precisely where Anstey locates Locke. Locke's pessimism regarding speculative natural philosophy is underlined by the argument that the *Essay* – based upon the belief that the natural-historical method was the only genuine solution to our limited epistemic access to nature – represented 'a new genre of writing experimental histories of the understanding' (p. 225). That said, while Anstey convincingly argues for Locke as a proponent of the experimental philosophy, he is also keen to constitute evidence for Locke's growing preoccupation with the mathematical method of the *Principia* during the 1690s and, moreover, to do justice to Locke's interest in mercurialist transmutational chymistry.

John Locke and Natural Philosophy is a study in the history of philosophy, writes Anstey, not in the history of science (p. 1). Yet one would be hard pressed to argue that it is not just as much a history of science as it is a history of philosophy, and this intrinsic interdisciplinarity, I believe, says something about the considerable calibre of this monograph. There is a certain academic honesty at the heart of Anstey's analysis of Locke's relationship to the natural-philosophical milieu in which he lived, and it is one which secures as much objectivity as possible given the available sources. *John Locke and Natural Philosophy* provides a comprehensive reconstruction of Locke's writings on natural philosophy, and should not be missed by anyone with an interest in the subject.

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