Giovanni Battista Morgagni Biography

Giovanni Battista Morgagni

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.



Contents

Giovanni Battista Morgagni Biography.....1

Contents.....2

Biography.....3

Biography

The Italian anatomist Giovanni Battista Morgagni (1682-1771) was the founder of pathological anatomy and the first to demonstrate the relation between disease symptoms and pathological changes in organs.

Giovanni Battista Morgagni was born on Feb. 25, 1682, in Forli. At 15 Giambattista, as he often signed his name, entered the University of Bologna to study medicine and received a degree in 1701. For a short time he continued studying and teaching at Bologna but soon entered medical practice in his native Forli.

In 1706 Morgagni published the first volume of *Adversaria anatomica,* a collection of medical essays communicated to the Academia Inquietorum which established Morgagni in the scientific community. Later contributions were published from 1717 to 1719. In 1711 he was offered the assistant professorship of theoretical medicine at the University of Padua, a school noted for its brilliant achievements in anatomy for 2 centuries. Morgagni accepted the post in 1712 and in 1715 was elevated to the rank of professor of anatomy. He remained at Padua as a popular teacher, anatomist, and clinical consultant until his death on Dec. 6, 1771.

In 1761, at the age of 79, Morgagni published his great work *De sedibus et causis morborum per anatomen indagatis libri quinque* (*On the Seats and Causes of Disease, Anatomically Studied*). For centuries physicians had been guided by the conviction that disease was always generalized throughout the whole body. Although pathological changes in organs had been noted before and although 17th- and early-18th-century anatomists recognized that such changes were sometimes related to the symptoms of specific diseases, *De sedibus* proved conclusively that this relationship was a valid one and demonstrated its full meaning.

Morgagni's work was based on years of careful observation and experiment, including over 600 postmortem examinations, in which he pinpointed pathological changes leading to death and showed the relationship with the symptoms of the illness preceding death. He also recognized the role of the nervous system in making symptoms felt at a point distant from the seat of the disease and the possible influence of such external factors as weather, age, and occupation in causing pathological changes. These achievements, plus his brilliant descriptions of pathological conditions, make Morgagni the founder of pathological anatomy, both as a distinct part of anatomical study and as a critical basis for understanding the cause of illness.