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and bioethics transformed medical decision making, Basic Books, 1991). All three trace the birth of bioethics to the problems of an exponentially expanded, publicly funded, technologically driven biomedicine being run as the private fiefdom by a professional elite who deemed themselves accountable only to themselves. As a matter of reciprocity and self-defence, patients and the public supported the creation of a new discipline whose mission was to hold the biomedical elite accountable to their values and interests.

Jonsen argues that this analysis is incomplete, however, because it does not explain why patients and the public turned to ethics, rather than to law. He argues that the ethical turn is explained by the fact that recruits for the new discipline were drawn from an American liberal intelligentsia energized by the civil rights and anti-war movements of the 1960s and 1970s. These intellectuals naturally transported the language of protest into the clinic. As one bioethicist remarked, "I moved easily from civil rights to patients' rights". The American public, in turn, was responsive to a discourse of ethical critique because of an entrenched moralizing tradition inherited from the Puritan past, because American liberalism is melioristic and reformist, and because individualism lies at the core of the American moral tradition.

As a preliminary to writing this book, Jonsen organized a conference to which he invited "many of the pioneers of bioethics". As he observes in the Acknowledgements, "their stories about the origins of the field . . . [serve] as the building blocks of this book". There is a sense in which his book, which emphasizes biography and which opens with an account of his own transformation from Jesuit priest to bioethicist, reads like an autobiography of a field, written by its founders, with Jonsen acting as amanuensis. It transcends journalism and, as good autobiographies should, offers perceptive detail and analysis that would otherwise be lost. As autobiography, it is unlikely to be the last word on the subject; none the less, Jonsen's accurate, comprehensive and insightful book

is clearly the indispensable first word for anyone seeking to understand the birth of bioethics.

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Steven B Karch, *A brief history of cocaine,* Boca Raton and Boston, CRC Press, 1998, pp. xxii, 202, illus., \$22.00 (0-849304019-5).

Twelve years ago, Steven B Karch, a doctor, was led into the study of cocaine toxicity when looking at problems associated with cardiac arrest. One thing led to another; science led to the history of science and then on to the history of the drug more generally. This book is the result.

Karch's history of cocaine starts with the Spanish occupation of Peru and the gradual increase in knowledge of the powers of the coca leaf through the work of the early botanists. Among the first commercial uses were the coca wines: the mass advertising of Mariani's coca wines was a model for later advertising hype. Chewing coca leaf was a vogue in the 1870s with pedestrians and elderly medical professors all vouching for its sustaining powers. The isolation of the alkaloid, cocaine, brought further medical interest. Freud's enthusiastic advocacy in *Über Coca* was followed by his assistant Koller's discovery of its local anaesthetic powers. Cocaine was the "miracle drug" of the 1880s, with proposed uses for everything from seasickness to neurasthenia.

In the US context, regulation came initially via the 1906 Food and Drugs Act, which controlled the coca wines and patent medicines containing narcotic drugs. Karch also considers the international production and trading aspects of the cocaine story. He describes the founding of the coca industry in Java and its connection with the rising Dutch pharmaceutical industry. The history of the pharmaceutical industry in general was intimately bound up with drugs

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like morphine, heroin and cocaine. Cocaine industry syndicates operated in the pre-World War One period in order to keep raw material prices down. But the crucial regulation was that put into place through international narcotics control, in particular the 1912 Hague Convention, made fully operational and applicable worldwide through the Versailles peace treaty. From this arose the narcotic control mechanisms of the League of Nations, still recognizable in the United Nations control systems today. America was initially the driving force behind international control, largely for trade reasons. Her concern was more the cultivation, while the other major powers had a concern with the manufacturing and industrial side of production.

The control system was founded on the belief that all the acceding countries recognized the dangers of the unregulated trade. But Japan, although adhering to the Convention and providing the necessary production returns, was the “black sheep” of the international drug trade. Japan used cocaine (and morphine and heroin) as a means to finance imperial expansion into Manchuria and China. Official reports understated production of cocaine, allowing profitable diversion onto the black market. A large cocaine refinery was built in Taiwan, while the Japanese companies, Mitsui, aided by government ministers, and Mitsubishi, fought a trade battle for rights to sell drugs in occupied China in the late 1930s.

Karch's initial interest in cardiac arrest has led him on to a much broader canvas. The book is based on wide reading and some work in primary sources, in particular the published Foreign Office opium imprint and the records of the war crimes tribunal in Tokyo after World War Two. The secondary reading is reasonably up to date—although some recent articles on Japan and the drug trade are not included. Where I found the book unsatisfactory was in its general lack of analysis and its disjointed style. This is especially noticeable in the first half, where information is relayed in a jumpy way and segments of the story—Freud, for example—are repeated in different chapters. The style quietens down in the second half and

the material on international trade and Japan is valuable. But Karch ends with the truism that the concerns of our predecessors about the drug “menace” were little different to those of the present day. It would have been more interesting to have some discussion of the interplay between industrial and manufacturing interests and international politics and trade as defining features of the drugs issue.

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Robert A Peel (ed.), *Essays in the history of eugenics*, Proceedings of a conference organized by the Galton Institute, London, 1997, London, Galton Institute, 1998, pp. xv, 233, £5.00 (0-9504066-3-5).

The Eugenics Education Society, founded in 1907, and now named the Galton Institute, recently held a conference to commemorate its ninetieth anniversary. This volume brings together ten of the contributions, six from leading academic historians of the subject, and the others from members of the Institute or practitioners in fields which have been supported by it. Although there are, as ever, problems in attributing a single line of interpretation to such multi-authored efforts, some kind of common, “revisionist” perspective does seem to be emerging here: one in which the conservatism, the class basis, and the negative eugenic policies of the movement are de-emphasised and localized; and in which its longer term move towards an alliance with progressive social reformers and its contribution to progress in science are brought to prominence.

The essays on the early movement provide welcome opportunities for some of the leading historians of the subject to reflect on the field, in some cases after a lengthy absence. Greta Jones describes the diverse and serious intellectual roots of eugenics in nineteenth-century Britain, contrasting this to the conservative, anti-welfarist direction taken