

Book Reviews

coroners and juries. Even within the medical profession, there was disagreement whether medical knowledge should come from a practitioner acquainted with the victim during life or from a specialist who knew only the dead body. As Burney shows through an ingenious discussion of the tools of post-mortem examination, the more sophisticated and specialized the medical intervention became, the more it tended to bypass the lay jury, while a less sophisticated approach could seem superfluous. And to many, medicine was hardly neutral: there was worry about doctor-coroners seeking to increase their incomes by performing unnecessary inquests or seeking to satisfy their curiosity in post-mortems. In most respects, the popular tribunal of the inquest did succumb to expertise. Major towns built facilities for the conduct of post-mortems and employed specialist pathologists who carried out their examinations away from public view. It became unnecessary for the jury even to view the body. Ironically, by the end of the period, the surgical theatre, a medical institution, had replaced the prison and the workhouse as a key site of vulnerability, a place where death required public explanation. Deaths under anaesthesia were the great concern. The inquest would represent the interests of the anaesthetized patient, who (undergoing surgery in a non-public space) was in no position to exert his or her will; it served equally as an essential means of public vindication of those who had carried out the surgery.

This is an important book, deserving to be read by historians of politics and of the state as well as of medicine. It should stimulate research, for there is much still to be done on the activities of coroners, the political uses of inquests, and the changing political and jurisprudential role of expertise in the development of the modern state.

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Sander L Gilman, *Love + marriage = death: and other essays on representing difference*, Stanford Studies in Jewish History and Culture, Stanford University Press, 1998, pp. ix, 247, £30.00, \$49.50 (hardback 0-8047-3261-2), £10.95, \$17.95 (paperback 0-8047-3262-0).

Like virtually all of Sander Gilman's numerous publications, this set of previously published essays is concerned with racial and sexual stereotypes. The title essay deals with the historical links between love, sex and death and how those links have been reinforced in this age of AIDS. Hopping merrily from Jonathan Swift to Shakespeare to Martin Amis, Gilman concludes that "the object of desire . . . carries with her the potential for the male's destruction" (p. 39). Not every essay here is that banal; the next two, indeed, are fascinating. One of them addresses the significance of conversion (to Christianity) among Central European Jews of the *fin de siècle*. Focusing on Max Nordau and Sigmund Freud, Gilman argues that both believed in the utter distinctiveness, not of the Jewish body, but of the Jewish mind and character. This fine study is followed by an illuminating discussion of the differentiation between the male Jew and the Jewess in the anti-Semitic discourse of turn-of-the-century Central Europe.

Gilman then turns to one of his old favourites: the theme that Jews are inherently predisposed to insanity, and Eastern European Jews even more so. This time around, he focuses on the 1938 novel by Albert Drach, *The massive file on Zwetschenbaum*, placing it in the contexts of medical and cultural ideas about Jewishness and madness. He then moves to the ultimate symbol of the mentally unstable Jew—the Viennese philosopher Otto Weininger—and Sigmund Freud, the prototypical Jewish doctor of the psyche. Ignoring the cultural contexts that shaped Weininger's work and downplaying his

misogyny, Gilman exaggerates his anti-Semitism, arguing that Freud's theories on creativity were universalizations of traits Weininger had considered to be quintessentially Jewish. (Gilman does not deign to tell us why, if Weininger's anti-Semitism was indeed so significant, it was wholly ignored by such openly anti-Semitic readers as Karl Kraus, who celebrated Weininger merely as a misogynist.)

The collection ends with two pieces on contemporary subjects, neither of much direct interest to medical historians: the art of R B Kitaj and new Jewish writing in Germany. Although too slight to bear the burden comfortably, both are garnished liberally with portentous reflections on identity, anti-Semitism and diasporism, most of which will be familiar to those who have read any of Gilman's earlier works.

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Jock Murray and Janet Murray, *Sir Charles Tupper: fighting doctor to father of confederation*, Canadian Medical Lives, Toronto, Associated Medical Services Inc. and Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1999, pp. 155, illus., \$18.95 (hardback 1-55041-183-7).

What do Rudolf Virchow, Ernesto "Che" Guevara, and the Physician Signers of the Declaration of Independence have in common with the Nova Scotian, Charles Tupper (1821–1915)? All were doctors who found an accord between medicine and politics and chose to enter the public life. More successful than most, Tupper became prime minister of Canada. Yet, only a handful of Canadians has ever heard of him; fewer still know that he was a medic. And, as this new biography shows, Tupper witnessed more defining moments in the history of his country than did the fictional American hero, Forrest Gump. Despite

Tupper's elevated place in the nation's history, we have few biographies, and most were written soon after his death.

After brief apprenticeships with local doctors, Tupper went to Edinburgh for medical studies, completing his training in 1843. Deeply impressed by his Scottish teachers, he retained a special fondness for J Y Simpson. Back in Nova Scotia, he began a busy general practice in the countryside of his birth. He married and his family grew despite several sad losses over the next decade and a half. In 1852, Tupper was invited to introduce a political figure at a Conservative party meeting. His flair for oratory astounded the speaker as much as his audience. In that memorable debut, he first crossed swords with his long-time, Maritime rival, Joseph Howe, a Liberal party stalwart known for zealous anti-Catholic, anti-French, anti-Canada rhetoric. Adept at speaking for hours without notes, Tupper preached unity, tolerance, and moderation, but he often turned a blind eye to the creeping control of business.

Using a wide range of sources, including the published works, archival material, and Tupper family recollections, the husband and wife team of Jock and Janet Murray have written a lively, accessible account of Tupper's political and medical life. The Murrays are well qualified for the task: both Nova Scotians; she a writer, journalist, and philanthropist; he a distinguished neurologist, historian of medicine, and former Dean of the Dalhousie medical school in Halifax (housed in the Tupper building).

First elected in 1855 (defeating Howe), Tupper soon became involved in the major events of his time: the Confederation of Canada, Manitoba unrest, the building of the Railway, the founding of the Canadian Medical Association, which he served as its first president for three consecutive terms. The nation's first prime minister, John A Macdonald, relied heavily on Tupper for support in the plan to unite British North America, but they had a falling out over