

came to understand their role in society. Though Grandy does not focus on audience reception, certainly a difficult thing to glean from the archive for this period, she sees these representations as having a powerful effect. Despite women having experienced real political and economic gains during this period, contemporary problems were reimagined “in ways that maintained traditional views of gender, work and nation” (178). In the end, Britons may not have been able to turn back the clock to before the war, but they could get a glimpse of that world by going to the movies or reading a bestseller.

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PETER GURNEY. *The Making of Consumer Culture in Modern Britain*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017. Pp. 274. \$102.60 (cloth).
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Peter Gurney’s already extensive contribution to the study of consumerism in Britain is now well embedded in the historiography. It is thus unsurprising that his latest contribution to this growing field, *The Making of Consumer Culture in Modern Britain*, is comprehensive and meticulous in equal measure. His aim to describe the evolution of consumer culture in Britain over two centuries is extremely ambitious, but one that he deftly pulls off. Gurney manages to challenge the reader while providing a detailed account that is accessible to both experts and beginners to the study of consumer culture. While recent decades have seen a large influx of studies on consumer culture, Gurney’s book has plenty of new and interesting things to say. It helps historians and general readers understand the changing nature of consumer culture in Britain, together with how the preferences of buyers and the marketing of products have played their part in the evolution of the marketplace in Britain.

Gurney organizes the book into three substantive sections that analyze consumerism both chronologically and thematically. It is a useful and interesting approach that sets the major changes in consumer culture in their wider context. Touching on major political developments, together with the changes in consumer practices, Gurney illustrates how both the business and political world responded to the vast changes in society and economics over the decades of the nineteenth and twentieth century. These changes produced a range of different and varied shopping experiences to meet the needs of consumers. From the development of department stores to the construction of consumer cooperatives (the so-called co-op), Gurney shows how consumption became an act of “pleasure” for consumers, while also creating a sense of inclusiveness, especially in working-class communities, through the creation of cooperative networks. Furthermore, the role of advertising, especially in gender focus and branding, was particularly significant in gaining the attention of consumers and targeting products toward certain consumer groups.

One of Gurney’s key themes is the role of Americanization in the consumer marketplace. This phenomenon began with the arrival of American businessmen in Britain toward the end of the nineteenth century. Harry Gordon Selfridge was one famous example, spending £36,000 on advertising for the opening day of his London department store. He realized the importance that the press would have in gaining favorable coverage for his venture. Advertising took a new direction in British consumer culture at the beginning of the twentieth century. Unlike in other areas of society, where women were deemed to be at a disadvantage to their male counterparts, the new consumer culture placed women at a higher level. Gurney argues that “department store bosses often played on the idea of female

empowerment, presenting themselves as champions of women's rights" (64) Nevertheless, this typically applied to only certain sections of the social structure and was largely attributed to the middle class, whose purchasing power reflected their greater financial means.

Gurney's chapter on the cooperative movement not only highlights the huge juxtaposition between consumer habits of the social classes, but also acts as an effective corrective to arguments that a consumer movement could work to unite the population. Gurney highlights tensions within liberal consumer movements, especially concerning the principle of free trade in the late nineteenth century. These tensions led to reforms introduced by Chamberlain that included imperial preference and tariff reform. Free trade was preserved by the Liberals going into the twentieth century. However, consumer society was changing, especially among the working class, who, thanks to the development of the cooperative movement, were given a platform to pursue and develop their own form of consumerism. This served to unite the working class at a time when many forms of consumerism, especially banking, was not open to those from the lower classes. Thus, the opening of the cooperative bank, together with the development of the Post Office Savings Bank, served to fill this void in the life of the working-class consumer. Moreover, these developments demonstrated the extent to which the working class distrusted state intervention in the consumer market and the cooperative movement signaled the way in which consumer society, especially for the working class, evolved through the development of movements that united communities in a sense of cooperation and mutual benefit.

The final two chapters show how consumerism developed into a mass movement in twentieth-century Britain. Consumer activity grew significantly in the interwar period. Nevertheless, this growth was unequal. In more prosperous areas of the East Midlands, for instance, life was different from that experienced by the unemployed in the now-impooverished industrial areas of northern England and South Wales. The end of the First World War saw many women return from the public sphere to the private sphere, where their role as homemakers was emphasized. With this moment, Gurney identifies a major shift in consumer culture. The publication of magazines such as *Good Housekeeping* (the British version of which launched in 1922) encouraged women to keep a high-standard and good-quality home. While this strategy ensured that the nature of consumers was heavily gendered, it also meant that consumer activity, even within the working class, was directed toward purchasing products for the improvement of life at home. With banks more willing to loan, mortgages more easily available, and living standards improving, the desire for purchasing products for an ideal home increased across all social classes. Furthermore, with the opening of shops such as Marks & Spencer, people of all social classes had a platform to purchase all the required products for their home and their family.

Gurney concludes by showing how consumerism has permeated all areas of British society. Identifying major changes that occurred in the 1980s, he demonstrates how wealth was once again used as a way of defining social class. While the changes in the 1980s firmly established the strength of the consumer within the society, disparities in wealth ensured that the nature of society became greedy—a phenomenon seized upon by opposition Labor party leaders throughout the decade. Nevertheless, understanding consumers' needs was central to the victories of the Conservative party throughout the 1980s, and it was this model that the Labor party needed to copy to successfully defeat the conservatives in the 1997 general election.

The range and depth of Gurney's study are hugely impressive. He writes in an accessible way that challenges the reader to think deeply about the concepts and ideas raised. He shows that the nature of the consumer society is both complex and varied. This book will undoubtedly become essential reading for students of consumer culture and appeal well beyond the history discipline. It should come highly recommended for all interested in the history of

consumerism in Britain, especially the ways in which gender and Americanization have played significant roles in shaping the behavior of the modern consumer.

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ANNE R. HANLEY. *Medicine, Knowledge and Venereal Diseases in England, 1886–1916*. Medicine and Biomedical Sciences in Modern History. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. Pp. 318. \$99.99 (cloth).
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The histories of venereal disease that discuss technological advances and laboratory discoveries often leave aside how and when these advances changed the practices of medical caregivers who saw patients suffering from such infection. We might recognize, for instance, the development of the Wassermann reaction for diagnosing infection or the reported success of Salvarsan in syphilis treatment, but we know less about how women and men caring for patients understood or utilized such technologies. The latter is a more difficult, less straightforward question, but Anne R. Hanley seeks to answer it in *Medicine, Knowledge and Venereal Diseases in England, 1886–1916*. Concentrating on the period between the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts and the conclusion of the Royal Commission on Venereal Disease, she explores the development and circulation of knowledge claims and clinical practices among different groups of English medical professionals. The testimonies and reports of the Royal Commission on Venereal Disease provide the backbone of her archive, but she also draws on evidence from a wide variety of sources—including case notes, nursing manuals and lecture notes, medical school syllabi and examinations, and medical periodicals—to craft a meticulously researched monograph. Hanley concludes that the circulation of venereological knowledge in England was haphazard and opportunistic. The implementation of changes to clinical practice involved very little systematization.

Much of what we learn about the circulation of medical knowledge from this work is not peculiar to venereal diseases; rather, Hanley self-consciously uses venereal disease as a lens through which to examine the history of English medical education and health care at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. Debates over the institutionalization of specialisms reveal the limitations and challenges of the categorization of medicine, especially with illnesses like venereal infections that affect so many different parts of the body. Students faced an overcrowded curriculum and very brief rotations in wards. Socioeconomic status dictated access to health care and influenced the circulation of knowledge in important ways. The volume of patients at Poor Law institutions meant that health care providers there saw many cases of venereal infection but rarely had the resources to provide individualized long-term care. Clubs and societies could refuse coverage for people with preexisting venereal conditions. Moreover, they could categorize an illness as something caused by one's own misconduct and refuse to pay for care, thereby accentuating difficulties and disparities in accessibility of treatment.

Within this framework of English medical education, Hanley's ambitious project does tell us much about technologies specific to venereal infections and to what extent these translated into changed expectations in bedside medicine. She explains in intricate detail the multiple obstacles that prevented technologies—such as opsonic indexing, the newly developed Salvarsan, and the Wassermann reaction—from becoming tools of medicine in everyday practice in England. Not only did the cost of the Wassermann test make it out of reach for many, but most doctors lacked the specialist skills necessary for performing the reaction. Physicians might well