

Book Reviews

Aborigines, the repercussions of European contact for levels of native infection and the racial discrimination inherent in the coercive regulations adopted to isolate Aboriginal victims of the disease. More contemporary concerns over the prevalence of HIV/AIDs in the Aboriginal people provides a preamble to a general consideration of the social and governmental responses to the “modern plague” since the early 1980s. The stress here is placed on the shift from “authoritarian contain and control strategies” to an emphasis on “cooperation and inclusion” designed to modify health-threatening patterns of sexual behaviour.

There are aspects of this volume that disappoint. The introduction does not convincingly locate the study within the wider historiography of STDs. Moreover, although there is a mass of contextual material on Europe and the USA, it is not always subjected to the sort of comparative analysis that might throw light on the social, political and cultural factors which explain variances in STD control strategies. There is a great deal on the parallel history of STDs elsewhere, but little on the patterns and processes of the diffusion of medical and social hygiene ideas. Even within Australia, one is left wondering why states varied in their public health responses. Moreover, although it is stressed that STD history must be analysed within its socio-cultural context, there is insufficient, discrete attention to issues of class, gender and generation within the social politics of STDs in Australia.

None the less, this is a very ambitious volume and has many strengths. Milton Lewis has an enviable grasp of the medical aspects of his subject and provides the reader with a clear and accessible analysis of the scientific advances in venereology, as well as a range of invaluable quantitative evidence on the incidence of STDs in Australia since the nineteenth century. Finally, and most importantly, state and federal policies are disaggregated and local case studies admirably synthesized. As a

result, a wealth of research material has been given broader exposure that will long be quarried by medical historians.

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Roy Porter and G S Rousseau, *Gout: the patrician malady*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1998, pp. xiv, 393, illus., £25.00 (0-300-07386-0).

James Gillray’s 1799 engraving *The gout*, depicting a devil breathing fire and attacking the great toe joint with sharp teeth and barbed claws epitomizes the pain of acute gout. There can be no more appropriate illustration for the dust jacket of a book on the history of the disorder and it is no surprise that Porter and Rousseau, like W S C Copeman for his earlier *A short history of the gout and the rheumatic diseases*, 1964, made this choice. There the similarities end. The latter work, according to Porter and Rousseau (p. 286, note 9), is overtly Whiggish and suffers from a lack of references and inaccurate quotations. The authors are brave men in raising the latter point but this reviewer is not about to check their copious quotations. There can, however, be no doubt that they succeed in remedying the other deficiencies with appropriate scholarship, a comprehensive index, 38 illustrations, 40 pages of notes, and a 72-page bibliography, including, *inter alia*, 28 works from the sixteenth century, 76 from the seventeenth, 255 from the eighteenth and 161 from the nineteenth.

The authors acknowledge reliance on the Burney-Fraser [*sic*] Collection on Gout and Arthritis in the Texas Medical Center Library, Houston, which is probably the world’s largest such special collection, although the Heberden Library in London is not far behind. Both catalogues can be accessed on the Internet: the Burbank-Fraser Collection (BFC) at <http://>

www.library.tmc.edu and the Heberden Library (HL) through <http://www.oup.co.uk/heberden>. English works predominate in these collections but the BFC is stronger in early modern texts and those from continental Europe. Woodcut illustrations were much more common in the latter books, particularly Renaissance works based on didactic irony. Porter and Rousseau include a print *Podagrae Ludus* attributed to H S Beham, 1607 (Plate 9, pp. 248–9), which in fact appeared earlier in two books from the Mainz press of Johann Schoeffer, H E Hessus, *Ludus de Podagra* . . . 1537, BFC, and, without the title, in an anonymous work, *Eyn Verantwortung Podagrae* . . . 1537, HL. It is also a pity that they missed Liberatis, *Podagra Politica, Noribergae*, 1659, BFC, with its engraved title page juxtaposing a man being treated for podagra and a revolutionary street scene, which would have served as a backdrop for their discussions of the use of gout as a political metaphor and confirmed that this was not confined to England (p. 305, note 116).

The numerical analysis of the bibliography serves to highlight how interest in gout peaked in the eighteenth century, particularly in England, and Porter and Rousseau succeed admirably in placing the narrative and visual accounts in their cultural and political contexts. This is the strength of their book. They parade an exclusively male cast of royalty, nobility, gentry, clerics and men of letters and science who wore their badge of gout with pride, signifying as it did wealth, power, privilege, creativity and longevity. If they did not have typical articular gout the more bizarre category of irregular gout, which might be atonic, flying or misplaced, ensured that almost any dis-ease brought them under its umbrella. The belief that treatment would internalize toxic humours leading to more life-threatening conditions caused much therapeutic confusion. The authors rightly identify William Cadogan's suggestion that gout was not hereditary and his call for a

moderate lifestyle in *A dissertation on the gout, and all chronic diseases*, 1771 (which went through numerous local and foreign editions and provoked many replies), as a turning point in the debate. Others had previously renounced gluttony and excessive alcohol intake and Porter and Rousseau argue that it was Cadogan's stand regarding the role of heredity and thereby constitutional factors that proved most controversial, particularly when viewed analogically as a challenge to the state.

However, while lifestyle changes and the rediscovery of colchicine brought significant therapeutic benefits, there were no paradigmatic leaps from the diagnostic morass. Confusion reigned well into the present century, and certainly until 1920 when the study ends, despite the earlier discoveries of the importance of uric acid and the delineation of other rheumatic diseases, particularly rheumatoid arthritis. Both areas are covered reasonably well, but Freudweiler's 1899 demonstration of an inflammatory response to injected sodium urate (J M Brill and D J McCarty, "Studies on the nature of gouty tophi" by Max Freudweiler, 1899', *Ann. Intern. Med.*, 1964, **60**: 486–505) is a notable omission. As well, there is some confusion over the title of Alfred Baring Garrod's landmark book (p. 176), *The nature and treatment of gout and rheumatic gout*, 1859, which inexplicably becomes *The treatise on gout and rheumatism* (p. 175 and p. 181) and his son Archibald's *A treatise on rheumatism and rheumatoid arthritis*, 1890, based on his father's notebooks, receives scant attention. There are also some irritating inaccuracies in clinical detail, particularly in the introduction where the authors attempt a brief overview of the rheumatic diseases. Whiggish it may be, but for such information Copeman's book remains a better source.

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