



The Neurological Patient in History (Rochester Studies in Medical History)

L. Stephen Jacyna, Stephen T. Casper

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Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, Tourette's, multiple sclerosis, stroke: all are neurological illnesses that create dysfunction, distress, and disability. With their symptoms ranging from impaired movement and paralysis to hallucinations and dementia, neurological patients present myriad puzzling disorders and medical challenges. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries countless stories about neurological patients appeared in newspapers, books, medical papers, and films. Often the patients were romanticized; indeed, it was common for physicians to cast neurological patients in a grand performance, allegedly giving audiences access to deep philosophical insights about the meaning of life and being. Beyond these romanticized images, however, the neurological patient was difficult to diagnose. Experiments often approached unethical realms, and treatment created challenges for patients, courts, caregivers, and even for patient advocacy organizations. In this kaleidoscopic study, the contributors illustrate how the neurological patient was constructed in history and came to occupy its role in Western culture. Stephen T. Casper is Assistant Professor in Humanities and Social Sciences at Clarkson University. L. Stephen Jacyna is reader in the History of Medicine and Director of the Centre for the History of Medicine at University College London.

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