

captions to the skilfully chosen illustrations supplement the text. Although any reader with any interest in the subject would find this a clear, compassionate and witty introduction, experts alone will appreciate quite how comprehensive and generous it is—and how free of the ideological obsessions and jargon-laden prose that the recent historiography of psychiatry seems unable to transcend.

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Lise Wilkinson and Anne Hardy, *Prevention and cure: the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. A 20th century quest for global public health*, London and New York, Kegan Paul, 2001, pp. 438, 32 figures, £65.00 (hardback 0-7103-0624-5). Distributed by John Wiley & Sons, Southern Cross Trading Estate, 1 Oldlands Way, Bognor Regis, West Sussex, PO22 9SA; and Columbia University Press, 61 West 62nd Street, New York, NY 10023, USA.

The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine has been discussed by historians largely in terms of its role in the development of tropical medicine, so this new history of the School, which gives equal weight to its work on hygiene, is most welcome. Also, the authors have taken the story beyond the “golden age” of imperial medicine before the First World War and paint a detailed picture of the development of the School’s teaching and research in circumstances that became quite difficult times. Just how difficult these times were is perhaps understated, for example, defending the School against the repeated claim that it was anachronistic to have such an institution in London once Britain had lost its empire, and maintaining an institution dedicated to public health in an era when medical practice became ever more centred on the individual clinical encounter. That said, the authors show that the School survived and flourished due to the quality, value and relevance of its research and teaching, which were adapted by successive

directors and departmental heads to changing political, economic and medical contexts.

The story of the foundation and early years of the London School of Tropical Medicine has been told many times, so rightly the authors do not dwell on the period before the 1920s, except to give valuable accounts of the work undertaken on specific vector borne parasitic diseases that so dominated tropical medicine at that time. The account of the coming together of tropical medicine with hygiene shows the many forces that shaped the new institution and in particular emphasizes the roles played by Robert Leiper and Andrew Balfour. They make it clear that “tropical medicine” was not a late addition to plans for a Rockefeller-funded School of Hygiene, but that it was an integral part from its earliest conception. The main body of the book is six chapters on the teaching and research work of different specialisms, beginning with epidemiology and medical statistics, where John Brownlee and Major Greenwood established high standards and diverse interests that were maintained by Austin Bradford Hill and Donald Reid. The early years of bacteriology and immunology in the new School were dominated by W W C Topley, whose renowned textbook, co-authored with G S Wilson, was based on the syllabus taught in the School. Topley and Wilson developed an all-purpose department that was strong in teaching, research, and consultancy, a fact evident in the late 1930s when it was chosen as the base for a new Public Health Laboratory Service, created to deal with anticipated wartime problems with communicable diseases. After 1945, the department’s work followed general trends in microbiology, with the growth of virology, vaccine development, testing and production, and latterly studies of parasite immunology.

In public health, the School’s staff are shown to have been leaders rather than followers, with activity grounded in the teaching of the Diploma of Public Health (DPH). The department’s first head, William Jameson, also served as Dean of the School and left to become Chief Medical Officer, playing a key role in the formulation of plans for a national health service. It was not until the mid-1950s that “social

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medicine” began to influence public health in the School, but thereafter it became a centre for radicalism and innovation, most notably through the work of Margot Jeffreys and Jerry Morris. The DPH was eventually replaced in 1967 by a Masters in social medicine, research on chronic diseases was added to existing strengths with communicable diseases, and the title public health was eventually replaced by community health. The other three chapters on specialisms cover occupational health, nutrition and the work of the School’s somewhat anomalous Winches Farm, a field station that had its origins in Leiper’s enthusiasm for agricultural parasitology and diversified into a research facility for various specialisms. The final chapters return to tropical medicine and map in turn the School’s overall work from 1919 to 1989. The implication, and this is something that could have been spelt out, is that there were in fact two Schools; one domestically orientated Hygiene School and an international School of Tropical Medicine, which left me wondering about the subtitle of a “quest for global public health”. The international work is exemplified in the chapter devoted to malaria, which charts the role of the School in attempts to control the disease, including the eradication years, and highlighting the work of the Ross Institute, which over time became an integral part of the institution.

The book ends with a very useful biographical section of major figures from the School’s past and present work. This highlights one of the most important features of the book overall, how it reveals the life and times of doctors and scientists of quite exceptional range and achievement in hygiene and tropical medicine. My appetite was certainly wetted for biographical studies of Robert Leiper, George MacDonald, and Alan Woodruff amongst many others.

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Irina Sirotkina, *Diagnosing literary genius: a cultural history of psychiatry in Russia, 1880–1930*, Medicine and Culture series, Baltimore

and London, John Hopkins University Press, 2002, pp. ix, 269, £33.50 (hardback 0-8018-6782-7)

There is something very clever about Irina Sirotkina’s *Diagnosing literary genius*. Sirotkina’s argument is premised on a rejection of the psychiatric historiography that was derived from the “labelling” theorists of the 1960s and 1970s. Post the anti-asylum movement, some historians and sociologists saw psychiatrists as popularizing the notion of genius as a psychological condition. In this light, the medicalization of genius was viewed as an attempt by psychiatrists to support their professional authority. Stepping outside this Anglo-American tradition, Sirotkina urges historians to take a broader cultural approach and engage with the contextual meaning of psychiatrists’ claims. In contrast to the opposition between scientific psychiatry and artistic genius to which we are accustomed, Sirotkina examines the genre of pathography (medical biography) in Russia to highlight the diverse ways literary genius was seen within the psychiatric and psychological establishment.

Diagnosing literary genius is not only a subtle rendering of the inadequacies of professionalization narratives. Sirotkina argues that literature was central to Russian culture and this centrality justifies an understanding of Russian psychiatry offered through pathography. For the Russian intelligentsia, of which psychiatrists were a part, literary criticism performed an important social function. Thus the first three chapters of *Diagnosing literary genius* examine the context surrounding late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century popular and medical commentaries on the writers Nikolai Gogol, Fedor Dostoevsky and Leo Tolstoy. In keeping with her thesis, Sirotkina shows how medical pathographies—focusing upon Gogol’s later turn to religion, Dostoevsky’s epilepsy and Tolstoy’s anarchist Christianity—were embedded in, and changed with, the place of psychiatry within society. Gogol’s spiritual turn, explained away by nineteenth-century psychiatrists who shared the prevalent