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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

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materialism of reformist Russia, was then re-evaluated as a new generation assimilated the works of Nietzsche. Dostoevsky's epilepsy became an important issue for liberal psychiatrists who constructed the diagnostic category of "progeneration" to account for both the writer's genius and their belief, inspired by Dostoevsky, that psychiatry should attend to the suffering inherent in the human condition. Tolstoy's rejection of both the tsarist regime and the materialism of the radicals in favour of a Christianity without Christ was initially interpreted as hysterical. Later, more sympathetic psychiatrists, increasingly sceptical about nineteenth-century positivism, took Tolstoy's anti-materialism seriously and looked to psychotherapy as the means to assess Tolstoy and explore how they related to their patients. The final two chapters build on these themes and examine Russian culture and medical writings on artistic trends in the early twentieth century. Between the extremes of revolution and decadence, psychiatrists now found their own distinctive form of social commentary, arguing for the preservation of the nation's mental health or for the creation of a socialist utopia based upon their insights into the human psyche.

While these subjects are fascinating and intricately researched, some of Sirotkina's observations on psychiatry can seem oddly disjointed from the context. Although a contextual understanding of psychiatry is offered, she makes only passing reference to how psychiatry, or science and medicine more generally, shaped the context in which they are now understood. Sirotkina intermittently refers to Isaiah Berlin's notion that nineteenth-century Russian art was charged with a social mission. But how medical pathographies, necessarily committed to a scientific cause, depart from this tradition, is left unexplored. For all their faults, professionalization narratives could be related to the process of industrialization. Sirotkina's book is a worthy and cleverly constructed attempt to redress the excesses of casting psychiatry as a self-interested body, but it should not be forgotten that psychiatrists, even when writing pathography, are, unlike artists, engaged in

the rationalization or standardization of human nature.

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Karen Jochelson, *The colour of disease: syphilis and racism in South Africa, 1880–1950*, St Antony's Series, Basingstoke, Palgrave in association with St Antony's College, Oxford, 2001, pp. xii, 248, £55.00 (hardback 0-333-74044-0).

This is an impressive study of the incidence of venereal disease (VD) in South Africa during a period of seventy years and official and medical efforts to control it. Drawing upon a wealth of original sources found in municipal, provincial and national archives, Karen Jochelson delineates the construction of racial identity in modern South Africa through medical and scientific discourses. In doing so, she demonstrates that the process of defining disease and disease carriers as medical problems is inherently political, meaning embedded in broader contested processes of political, economic and social change. Therefore her study is valuable to scholars concerned with the analysis of epidemics in South Africa specifically and the history of medicine generally.

Jochelson uses a blend of political economy and social constructionism to present a history of the causes and cures for VD, and, more significantly, to restore the disease to its social and historical context. The study links the spread of VD among the majority African population to socio-economic processes such as conquest, land dispossession, poverty, migrancy, urbanization and industrialization, which were devastating to African societies and disrupted their social networks and stable sexual relationships. At the same time it explores the myriad ways that VD and suspected carriers were constructed, demonstrating how concerns about wider social changes were reflected in the perception of potential VD carriers. For example,