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Wellcome HISTORY

MEDICAL HISTORY IN JAPAN

From scientific Shintōism
to Yokkaichi asthma



local health administration. He had experience working at health centres in Nagoya. After World War II, he returned to Nagoya University and established the Department of Public Health. In 1959–60, Mizuno was shown a blueprint of the development of Yokkaichi by the director of Yokkaichi City Health Centre. Mizuno suggested organising a committee to measure pollution and became a member.

After the lawsuit began, Yoshida supported the plaintiff's claim, facing the difficulty of proving a link

between the exhaust gas and the symptoms. Although Yoshida and Mizuno were unfamiliar with the problem of air pollution, they were committed to the solving the problem of asthma in Yokkaichi in collaboration with public health practitioners and lawyers.

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Whose Blood: A Tale of Desire and Despair Set in a 19th Century Operating Theatre

Event review

Helen Bynum



Efuia (Candice Onyeama) and Hugo (Mark Hawkins) meet in a 19th-century gin shop. *Alex/No Not Never*

What would you do for the one you love? Alex Burger's new play, which premiered in London in March 2011, explores this question (and much more) in the medically and socially charged atmosphere of Britain in the early 1830s.

In 1831 cholera arrived in Sunderland, soon to spread throughout the country. In 1832 the Anatomy Act was passed, allowing the unclaimed bodies of the poor to be used for dissection, and the Poor Law Commission was established under Edwin Chadwick to investigate how to deal with the pressing problem of the urban poor. As the play comes to its tragic close in 1833, the British Government passes the Slavery Abolition Act. It is a tribute to Burger's writing that so much is conveyed in an hour-long play without obvious didacticism.

In *Whose Blood*, Abakah and Efuia Kuntu (Charlie Folorunsho and Candice Onyeama) are an ambitious West African couple who have journeyed to London in search of a better life for their young child. Efuia makes very good gin, the sale of which supplements their combined income from working as a factory hand in a hatter's and a labourer in a tanner's. Life is good enough, until Abakah's swollen and increasingly painful liver prompts Efuia to seek the aid of an ambitious young surgeon, Hugo Forester (Mark Hawkins). She offers him her gin and then herself to win his help for Abakah after they are turned away from St Thomas' Hospital, judged by the hospital's authorities as insufficiently 'deserving' to qualify for free treatment.

The choice of St Thomas' is not incidental. Burger conceived *Whose Blood* to be performed in the Old Operating

Theatre, once part of the old St Thomas' Hospital before its move westwards along London's South Bank. The operating theatre was built in the attic of St Thomas' Church in 1822. Now a popular museum, it provided a unique theatrical setting. This was one of the attractions for the play's director Karena Johnson (CEO/Artistic Director at the Broadway, Barking, London), who uses its confines to good effect. In such a small space, the proximity of audience and actors would inevitably provoke a frisson, but Burger goes beyond the obvious and has much of the rhythmic dialogue aimed directly outwards. The audience are a mutable fifth character: a medical student during consultations, a witness during Efua's spiritual rituals and a confidant for everyone.

Hugo works under the tutelage of the senior surgeon Samuel Carter (John Gorick). Samuel is weary; he avoids the ghosts of his patients by taking laudanum. Hugo ensures Samuel has a supply of the drug, just as he looks after the supply of bodies – both licit and illicit – required for anatomical and surgical instruction. Eventually, Abakah makes an evening call on the senior surgeon. He needs to know his chances with or without an experimental operation and weigh up what his body might be worth to his wife. He finds a spaced-out Samuel slouched against the back wall of the operating theatre, and the two engage in a dialogue otherwise unthinkable across the class and racial divide separating them. It is a conversation composed

of the dreamlike repetition of key words: "I am the chief surgeon", "I am the son of a chief". The morning after they have met and talked as equals, the senior surgeon haughtily refuses to engage with his black working-class patient when Abakah tentatively reminds him of their shared identity. There is no poetry without laudanum. Samuel also remains reluctant to carry out the drainage operation suggested by Hugo. Unperturbed, Hugo seizes the initiative: after all, success would make him a famous surgeon, and failure might easily be swept away given the marginality of his patient. Abakah's blood, like that of the others in the operating theatre – the blood of the title – can be soaked up in the fresh sawdust in the box on the floor.

Efua opens and closes the play with a sung ritual for the dead, her voice joined by the other members of the cast offstage. It is a powerful piece of direction and sets the tone for what is ultimately Efua's play. When Abakah drifts into sentimental, flawed memories of life in their home village, she pulls him up short because it is her faith in Hugo's medicine, rather than the traditional medicine of their African home, that drives her onwards. It is her story, and it is ably told through Onyeama's strong performance.

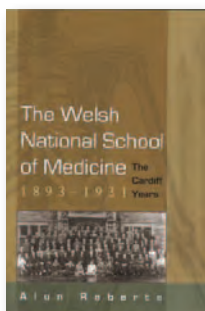
This Bankcider production of the play was supported by the Wellcome Trust, the Guy's and St Thomas' Charity, the Talawa Theatre Company, the Broadway, and the Arts Council.

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The Welsh National School of Medicine, 1893–1931: The Cardiff Years

Book review

Keith Williams



There has been a growing awareness of the importance to medical education of the developments in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It was during this period that the essential framework of the present medical curriculum was defined, that research began to be embraced by the medical community, and that new relationships were formed between universities and

their associated hospitals. Surprisingly, this is an area that has tended to be neglected somewhat by medical historians, and Alun Roberts' book is an authoritative and welcome addition to the literature on the subject.

Roberts has provided a fascinating account of the Cardiff medical school during the first four decades of its existence, from its foundation as part of the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire ('the College') in 1893 until it became a separate and independent entity within the University of Wales in 1931. As is befitting what Roberts describes as being "a biography of an institution", the book is largely a chronological narrative, focusing

mainly on the events leading up to and surrounding the three major milestones in the school's history in this period: its foundation, its development as a full medical school in 1921 and its establishment as a discrete entity in 1931. This is a story that is full of paradoxes, for while the school was often at the vanguard of medical educational developments, it was often shaken, and at one point nearly destroyed, by various conflicts arising from the involvement of combatant and dominant personalities. This feature was to lead Sir George Newman, the chief medical officer at the Ministry of Health, to remark that "agreement is a very rare quality in South Wales". Empire building, turf wars, bureaucratic encumbrances, petty jealousies, personal enmities, financial anxieties, and the impact of local and national politics are all to be found in Roberts' narrative. Indeed, it is a work that is as much a case study in organisational misbehaviour as it is a story about the development of Welsh medical education.

The first few chapters of the work provide a useful background in terms of the development of medical education in the UK in the 19th century, the foundation of the University of Wales, and the Cardiff College. It then goes on to discuss the events leading to the founding of the medical school, which for its first 25 years was limited to