



<http://www.ucalgary.ca/hic> • ISSN 1492-7810
2017-19 • Vol. 12, No. 1

Volker Roelcke, Paul J. Weindling, and Louise Westwood, eds., *International Relations in Psychiatry: Britain, Germany, and the United States to World War II*. Rochester Studies in Medical History. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2010. Pp. vi + 254, illus. USD\$90.00 (cloth). ISBN 978-1-58046-339-3.

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In the history of psychiatry and neuroscience, there has been a historical trend towards biographical discussions of important individuals or national narratives of the unique political and social structures that shaped the development of a discipline within a single country. Even comparative approaches had similar limitations, as they focused on the main researchers and institutes involved in the birth of these disciplines in each nation. The editors of this volume have taken the field into a new plane of analysis by placing themselves firmly outside these standard approaches, and instead inside a global historical context. Such approaches, they state, are “intrinsically linked with the danger of a historiographically inappropriate assumption of national self-sufficiency or even uniformity” (2). Earlier approaches were self-limiting, as they homogenized a complex network of individual interactions between scholars and institutes in various regional locations. The compiled chapters of this volume allow for nuance to shine through by highlighting the movement of people, ideas, and money across the Western world, which influenced the development of psychiatric practice and theory in an interconnected web of political and social context.

The book utilizes Britain, Germany, and the United States as focal points in how intellectual networks formed and interacted throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This work is a true meeting of minds, containing contributions from many authorities on the history of psychiatry, including well-known scholars such as Paul J. Weindling, Eric J. Engstrom, and Hans Pols. The larger themes of international discourse and interconnectedness in psychiatry are present in all eleven chapters. For example, the clear evidence for permeability of intellectual concepts from France, Germany, Scandinavia, and America in the creation of the British “medico-pedagogy” given by Mark Jackson (30–47) provides a solid foundation to the claim of the editors that comparative analysis provides richer insight into all countries when it does beyond an emphasis on difference (2).

The volume begins with a chapter by Heinz-Peter Schmiedebach, who provides an insightful discussion of how early German psychiatrists viewed the British asylum system. German psychiatrists held a rosy image of British asylums in the nineteenth century, viewing them as being “ahead of the German system in many aspects” (24). German psychiatrists constantly referred to British institutions as they discussed how best to change their system of institutional treatment in the following years. Rhodri Hayword’s chapter provides a complementary discussion on British reactions to German psychiatry, which excellently situates the reader within the cross-national narratives of other forms of treatment. The chapters by Volker Roelcke and John Burnham similarly tease out the international influences which permeated the

intellectual discussions of psychiatry between Germany and the United States. Burnham argues these connections represent “the great tradition of medicine operating as a universal enterprise” (103), and his analysis of international dimensions indeed solidifies this statement.

While these transnational connections develop complexity in the global narrative, this volume also problematizes broad national narratives by focusing on internal variation within countries. This is seen in the chapters provided by Louise Westwood and Pamela Michael. Both highlight regional variations within Britain by breaking away from the dominant anglocentric narrative and analysing Scottish and Welsh psychiatry. In Westwood’s chapter, we not only are presented with a discussion of the pivotal differences between Scottish and English psychiatry, but additionally are confronted with the gender politics which regulated women’s place within the profession. Michael gives a unique insight into the development of Welsh psychiatry and the incorporation of intellectual frameworks from America and Europe throughout its growth. This process “was not one of linear diffusion, but rather one of a more dynamic circulation” (213). In both chapters, the reader is spurred to see the deeper regional complexities of nationalized medical systems.

The chapters thus highlight many connections and influences that existed within national psychiatric disciplines before the Second World War. However, the reader at times finds him- or herself searching for discussion which takes a step past mere connections. Despite the best of intentions, the contributors do not fully step away from the standard narrative of “great men” and “great institutes.” The career of Emil Kraepelin (1856–1926) is intimately traced in the discussion of psychiatric research in Munich, where the reader is given an almost biographical sketch of his actions in the early twentieth century. Yet it should be noted that even here, a new aspect is drawn out from the well-known narrative, as the author interweaves a discussion about the movement of money between international parties. The relationship between finance and the development of the psychiatric profession is briefly mentioned in several chapters but is not explicitly explored with a critical depth in the discussion.

Despite these minor critiques, By continuously revealing the underlying connections that influenced intellectuals in Britain, Germany, and the United States, this book successfully paints an intriguing picture of the larger complexities regulating psychiatric disciplines in the past. Overall it is an excellent addition to the medical and global historiography, as it takes the analysis past the comparative approach into a new sphere, revealing the early, complex connections of nations, people, and funding institutes. Too often historians have found themselves caged within nationalistic barriers placed on historical research, and this volume reminds us of the importance of contextualizing networks of influence that stretch beyond imagined political borders and entangle historical actors in larger systems.