

CALL FOR PAPERS

Symposium: Psychiatry in the 19th and 20th centuries from a transnational perspective

Date: 21-22 November 2018

Location: Luxembourg

Organisers: Eva Andersen & Benoît Majerus (C²DH, University of Luxembourg)

Submission deadline: 22 June 2018

Language: English

Keynote speaker: Waltraud Ernst (Oxford Brookes University)

In recent years the buzzword in historical research has been “transnational history”. Although over the past 15 years some historians have begun to integrate this perspective into the history of medicine and psychiatry, especially with respect to colonial history, this research area remains underdeveloped (Ernst and Mueller 2010; Roelcke et al. 2010; Novella and Huertas 2011; Burnham 2012; Ernst 2013; Hashimoto 2013; Marks 2015; Novella 2016; Müller 2017).

As Roelcke et al. put it, “[...] any up-to-date history of knowledge [...] needs to take forms of transnational communication and transfer into account” (Roelcke et al. 2010, 8). Although it goes without saying that there have been transnational contacts and transfers of knowledge in the psychiatric field — translations of books, international conferences, correspondence, memberships in associations, international travel — research on these processes remains rare. This raises the urgent question of how to approach research on psychiatric history with a transnational framework in mind.

This symposium therefore aims to frame the history of psychiatry within two pillars of transnational research, encouraging participants to move away from the concept of the nation (state) that has long defined and guided research in all historical fields (Clavin 2010; Iriye 2013; Bayly et al. 2006; Laqua 2013; Haupt and Kocka 2012). Firstly, adopting a transnational approach to history allows us to break free from national

constructions and boundaries, but at the same time we should not forget that transnational history is also intrinsically linked to the nation itself, as the term implies. Secondly, and more importantly, writing a transnational history of psychiatry involves looking at “links and flows, and want[ing] to track people, ideas, products, processes and patterns that operate over, across, through, beyond, above, under or in-between polities and societies”, as Iriye and Saunier have asserted (Iriye and Saunier 2009, XVIII). Rather than comparing two or three national histories of psychiatry, the goal of this symposium is to focus on the “in-betweenness” and interconnectedness of these histories.

Links and flows

These connections in particular should become more central in the history of psychiatry, allowing us both to breathe new life into topics that we have hitherto only understood from a national perspective and also to learn more about the interaction, mediation and negotiation processes that have taken place in psychiatry. Who were the initiators, intermediators and receivers of psychiatric knowledge? What were the geographical start and end points of these transfer processes? How did the cross-border transfer of concepts, ideas, practices and people (psychiatrists, nurses and patients) influence local, regional, national and international circumstances? Were foreign practices generally fully incorporated in other countries, or were they adapted, transformed and combined with local or national knowledge?

Theoretical and practical psychiatry

This approach allows us to examine the history of psychiatry on an “intellectual” as well as a “practical” level: it gives us the opportunity to look at how foreign knowledge was perceived by specific nations, since these transfers were never neutral and often created tensions amongst psychiatrists. International contacts might have reinforced certain national ideas while also creating shared goals and fostering agreement among the international psychiatric community. What was the national or international impact of transferring knowledge and practices? How was foreign knowledge received and interpreted? Did psychiatrists and their governments struggle with the appropriation of foreign knowledge? We can also consider how specific practices developed and

evolved from a transnational perspective by examining the communication that took place among alienists and psychiatric/medical associations and identifying how and whether these practices were implemented in psychiatric institutions and hospitals. Finally, we can look at practical considerations, for example the logistics of international conferences and foreign travel.

By reflecting on interaction, negotiation, perception and practice from a transnational point of view we can see a wide range of subjects — treatments and therapeutics, asylums, medical instruments, psychiatric literature, disease patterns and classifications, conferences, psychiatrists and patients, travel, psychiatric associations and universities — in a new light. Moreover, asking these questions gives us a more transparent view of the context and complexity of transformations in psychiatry, challenging the “overgeneralisation” of certain trends and influences in the history of psychiatry and dissolving the black and white image of what lies at the “centre” and the “periphery” of psychiatric knowledge (Müller 2017). Instead of looking simply at the history of psychiatry in a particular country, we now examine the position of psychiatry in relation to other countries and its impact at local, national and international level.

List of topics and questions

The symposium welcomes contributions that explore the interconnectedness of all aspects of psychiatric history and address a range of countries or continents during the 19th and 20th centuries. We also encourage participants to describe how they define transnational history (i.e. in relation to global or comparative history) and how they approach the transnational history of psychiatry from a methodological point of view (i.e. gathering and analysing sources, using software, etc.).

Research topics might include the following:

- Mental diseases, their patterns and diagnosis
- Treatments, cures and practices
- Conformity with and resistance to psychiatric knowledge and practices
- Networks of psychiatrists

- Asylums, sanatoriums and hospitals
- International psychiatric conferences
- Medical apparatus and objects
- The representation of foreign psychiatry in popular media (i.e. newspapers)
- The exchange and translation of psychiatric books and articles
- Psychiatric associations
- The career relocation of psychiatrists to foreign mental hospitals and universities
- The transfer of patients to a foreign country and the treatment of foreign patients
- Travel to mental institutions, hospitals and universities
- Correspondence between psychiatrists
- The initiators, intermediators and receivers of psychiatric knowledge
- Exploring the nuances of what are traditionally seen as the “centre” and “periphery” of psychiatric knowledge
- Methodological practices for writing a transnational history of psychiatry

The workshop is part of the PhD project “The importance of transnational contacts for the dissemination of psychiatric knowledge in Europe (1841-1940)” by Eva Andersen, under the supervision of Professor Benoît Majerus, at the University of Luxembourg.

Submission guidelines

Submission deadline: 22 June 2018

Format: conference paper

Word limit for abstracts: max. 2000 characters (without spaces)

How to submit: send an abstract and a short CV to eva.andersen@uni.lu.

A maximum of 6 to 8 papers will be accepted. Presentations will last 20 minutes with the possibility to ask questions (10 minutes).

Contact details

Eva Andersen (C²DH, University of Luxembourg): eva.andersen@uni.lu

Literature

Waltraud Ernst and Thomas Mueller, *Transnational psychiatries: social and cultural histories of psychiatry in comparative perspective c. 1800-2000*, Newcastle upon Tyne, 2010.

Volker Roelcke, Paul J. Weindling, and Louise Westwood, eds, *International Relations in Psychiatry: Britain, Germany, and the United States to World War II*, Rochester, 2010.

E. J. Novella and R. Huertas, "Alexandre Brierre de Boismont and the origins of the Spanish psychiatric profession", *History of Psychiatry*, 22: 88 Pt 4, December 2011, 387–402.

J. C. Burnham, "Transnational history of Medicine after 1950: Framing and Interrogation from Psychiatric Journals", *Medical History*, 55: 1, 2012, 3–26.

Waltraud Ernst, *Colonialism and transnational psychiatry: the development of an Indian mental hospital in British India, c. 1925-1940*, London, 2013.

Akira Hashimoto, "A 'German world' shared among doctors: a history of the relationship between Japanese and German psychiatry before World War II", *History of psychiatry*, 24: 2, 2013, 180–195.

Sarah Marks, "Communist Europe and Transnational Psychiatry", *Basingstoke, Psychiatry in Communist Europe*, 2015, 1–26.

Enric J. Novella, "Travel and professional networks in the origins of Spanish psychiatry", *História, Ciências, Saúde-Manguinhos*, 23: 4, December 2016, 1023–1040.

Thomas Müller, *Zentrum und Peripherie in der Geschichte der Psychiatrie Regionale, nationale und internationale Perspektiven*, 2017.

Patricia Clavin, "Time, Manner, Place: Writing Modern European History in Global, Transnational and International Contexts", *European History Quarterly*, 40: 4, 2010, 624–640.

Akira Iriye, "The rise of global and transnational history" in *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present, and Future*, Basingstoke, 2013.

C.A. Bayly, Sven Beckert, Matthew Connelly, Isabel Hofmeyer, Wendy Kozel, and Patricia Seed, 'AHR conversation: on transnational history', *American Historical Review*, 111, 2006, 1440–1464.

Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka, *Comparative and Transnational History: Central European Approaches and New Perspectives*, 2012.

Akira Iriye and Pierre-Yves Saunier, *The Palgrave dictionary of transnational history*, Basingstoke, 2009.