

GUEST EDITORS' NOTE

Transcultural histories of psychotherapies: new narratives

Dear readers,

In this special issue, we investigate histories of psychotherapies. The term “psychotherapy” has been used since the mid-nineteenth century. Medical doctors from several schools, like Tuke, Bernheim and Van Eeden, started to use it to define therapies that sought moral treatment, cure of automatism, persuading or producing catharsis, affecting body, mind and unconscious. In the early twentieth century, the word reached broader circulation and was adopted by authors as Dubois, Janet, Forel, Jaspers and Jung, who sought to affect behaviors and the unconscious. The term gained wider prominence and diversity in the post-Second World War, being adopted by authors of psychoanalytic reference, Gestalt therapy, existential school and even authors from cognitive-behavioral referential (Borch-Jacobsen, 2009). In the contemporary world, despite the lack of consensus about its meaning, psychotherapies gained an even more central role for the definition of subjects, having an impact on the concept of psychological suffering and wellbeing and the idea of identity; it is possible to state that today we are psychotherapeutic cultures and societies (Shamdasani, 2017).

This special issue presents different histories of psychotherapies, considering that the expression configures a set of practices, historically situated, which incorporate and produce specific cultural values that must be investigated in terms of circulation, exchange and movement of a network of practices connected in different domains (Subrahmanyam, 2004). The proposal arises from debates held within an international group coordinated by Professor Sonu Shamdasani (University College London, UCL), which has been meeting annually since 2016 (recently only online) with the support of UCL Global Engagement Office. Since 2019, the theme gained a new institutionalization by means of a “Memorandum of Understanding” between UCL and Fundação Oswaldo Cruz (Fiocruz). From these exchanges, new members were incorporated into the group, which is composed of psychologists, psychoanalysts, historians and philosophers from countries in Latin America, Asia, Europe and the United States.

The article by Sonu Shamdasani opens this issue. His work reflects about the development of the transcultural perspective on the history of psychotherapies. Analyzing the historiography on the theme, the author points out the limits of studies that think psychotherapies in universalist terms, proposing that the recognition of cultural and temporal aspects in western psychotherapies enables the understanding of their appropriation in radically different cultural contexts, in forms of reciprocal exchange networks.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S0104-59702022000500001>



In her work, Cristiana Facchinetti discusses the medical-mental interpretations about the relations between art and madness in a psychiatric hospital in Brazil in the nineteenth century and their psychotherapeutic use. Drawing on primary sources, the article discusses the reasons why such manifestations and the deriving psychotherapies were largely forgotten by historiography, which usually points that the relation between art and therapy in the country only started in the 1940s.

The historian Akihito Suzuki discusses the appropriation of psychiatry in Japan in the second quarter of the twentieth century. His text is particularly dedicated to the study of the psychotherapeutic treatment of hospitalized patients in the period, in a strategy of analysis that investigates the complexities of the encounter of hospital clinical practices and the Japanese culture with Korean immigrants hospitalized in those institutions, highlighting the issues resulting from these cultural (mis)encounters.

Suzanne Nortier Hollman indicates how psychoanalysis was appropriated by a North American psychiatric institution back in the early years of the twentieth century, before Sigmund Freud's visit to the United States, in 1909. From the examination of the institutional documentation, the author demonstrates that psychotherapeutic practices used at that time included a broad group of patients, without limiting the practice in terms of formal education, social class or diagnosis, as psychoanalysis was later appropriated in that country.

Renato Foschi and Andrea Romano investigate the entry of psychoanalysis in Italy from twentieth century on, detached from the control of psychoanalytic societies and under the influence of the Italian experimental psychology, which introduced it in the country. The authors demonstrate how, by means of this referential, psychoanalysis converted into a starting point for the development of different types of psychotherapies along the twentieth century.

The next article addresses the history of art therapy. Jelena Martinovic discusses its professionalization process in the post-war, in England, France, Germany and Switzerland. The aim is to demonstrate how and in which length art therapy became involved with the application of mind-altering drugs, especially LSD. The author also contextualizes the studies on creativity in the post-war, demonstrating how they evolved in relation to art therapy, highlighting the conflicting relationship with psychiatric art in the period.

Marco Innamorati addresses the different forms by which Freudian, Jungian and psychodynamics (or psychotherapy) theories deal with the patient's refusal of interpretation. Then he compares these interpretations with the approaches of other psychotherapies, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy and family therapy. Following different ontologies and meanings of truth implicit in the various theories, the author concentrates on the debate about what is psychotherapy and its fundamentals.

Closing the studies of the group, the article by Ulrich Koch places the emergence and the evolution of psychotherapeutic techniques that seek to establish, maintain and control a transforming relationship between therapist and patient in the broad context of changes in social and political relations in the twentieth century. In doing so, the author highlights the close connection between therapeutic processes, and their regulations, and the wider social context.

This special issue has three other articles by Latin American authors, highly interconnected with the theme of transculturalism.

Analyzing the Argentinian case of mechanical therapeutics and its impact on psychism, very much in accordance with the theoretical perspectives of the interwar period, José Ignacio Allevi studies the case of shock therapy circulation in Rosario, Argentina, highlighting local issues that enabled its appropriation and the resulting specificities.

Debating the impact in Brazil of the end of the Second World War, Guilherme Marques and Carolina Carvalho study the local psychiatry performance in a context in which mental health sought to gain legitimacy in the selection of immigrants, under the key of reading war traumas. The authors investigate how the theories that circulated then were adjusted to the interests and contexts of the post-war period.

Finally, Carla Ribeiro Guedes, Vanessa Maia Rangel and Kenneth Rochel de Camargo Jr. historicize the formation of a disciplinary field in Brazil, “psychosomatic medicine” or “medical psychology,” organized by the physician and psychoanalyst Julio de Mello Filho (1933-2018). They also discuss the development of the field in the face of new political-scientific conjunctures, which culminated in its distancing from the psychiatric field and its approximation of the discipline of health psychology.

As you can see, the papers gathered in this issue provide many elements for a critical appreciation of the transcultural circulation of psychotherapeutic knowledge and practices in Argentina, Brazil, Italy, Japan, Switzerland and the United States, besides including debates on their fundaments and truth.

We wish you a good reading!

REFERENCES

- BORCH-JACOBSEN, Mikkel. *Making minds and madness: from hysteria to depression*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- SHAMDASANI, Sonu. Psychotherapy in society: historical reflections. In: Eghigian, Greg (ed.). *The Routledge history of madness and mental health*. London: Routledge, 2017. p.363-378.
- SUBRAHMANYAM, Sanjay. *Explorations in connected history: from the Tagus to the Ganges*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

*Sonu Shamdasani*ⁱ

ⁱ Health Humanities Centre/University College London.
London – United Kingdom
orcid.org/0000-0002-8729-8385

*Cristiana Facchinetti*ⁱⁱ

ⁱⁱ Postgraduate Program in History of Sciences and Health/
Casa de Oswaldo Cruz/Fiocruz.
Rio de Janeiro – RJ – Brazil
orcid.org/0000-0003-4879-0307