

This edited volume exemplifies the best traditions of history of medicine research. It gives the reader a systematic critical appraisal of the use of work and work therapy in psychiatric institutions in a global perspective from the late 1800s to the end of the 20th century. This book offers 16 essays, that cover the history of patient work in various locations throughout the world. Included are essays from Northern America, Japan, India and Western as well as Eastern Europe. Waltraud Ernst, professor of History of Medicine at Oxford Brookes University, brought together an esteemed group of experts on history of psychiatry.

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As part of the Manchester University Press series this book explores the daily routine in psychiatric institutions. Also it asks whether work acts as therapy, as punishment or as labour exploitation. Some chapters are based on presentations given at the International research Symposium on *Therapy and Empowerment – Coercion and Punishment*, held at St. Anne's College, Oxford, in June 2013.

The opening chapter on the role of work in late 18th and early 19th century is about moral treatment in France, Tuscany and Britain. In it, Jane Freebody emphasizes that that work was not considered an integral part of moral treatment throughout the period between 1750 and 1840.

The following three chapters focus on ideas and practices in institutions in northern America, which came to greatly influence to European regimes of work therapy from the late 19th century onwards (cf. 11). While Ben Harris looks at patient labour in the United States from the foundation of the asylum to the start of its passing in the 1960s, James Moran explores the ways in which the “cult of productivity” (78) had a bearing on civil trials in lunacy. His outlook on productive work as a salutary sign of mental soundness, contrasts sharply with the ways in which work was understood therapeutically and organised institutionally for patient in an asylum setting (cf. 94). Kathryn McKay provides a detailed analysis of work in a specific institution. Her chapter focuses on the Provincial Mental Hospital in British Columbia, Canada, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries (cf. 13). McKay examines “how medical superintendents presented patient work within the larger narrative structure of the annual reports submitted to the Provincial Secretary.” (99)

Certain aspects debated by McKay, like the role of well-organised patient work as a marker of modern hospital practice or gendered and racially diversified work regimes, are echoed in the following two chapters on the colonial contexts of the British West Indies and British India. The chapter of Waltraud Ernst focuses on the on the organisation of patient work in the mental institutions established by the British for both Europeans and Indians in South Asia. Ernst shows that ideas on and practices of patient work in therapeutic and institutional contexts were closely informed by varied European and North American psychiatric paradigms (cf. 115). Leonard Smith emphasizes the central role of the medical men who had been trained within the British public asylum system. He notes, that in the Caribbean, the important role attributed to patient work in psychiatric regimes such as moral management fitted in well with colonial perceptions of the main role of colonized people (149).

The chapters by Hashimoto and Nakamura treat another non-Western context. As in the West and East Indies, the trope of westernization is at the centre of analysis. Akira Hashimoto maps the prevalence of German influence in the conceptualisation and practice of patient work in the late 19th and the 20th centuries in Japan. The chapter of Osama Nakamura shows with the example of the “Japanese Gheel” Iwakura near Kyoto how the family host system contributed considerably to the regional economy. Contrary to Japan, family host care was considered mostly inappropriate in Romania, as the chapter by Valentin-Veron Toma shows.

The chapters on patient work in German asylums focus on two very different regions: the northern port city state of Hamburg and southern, rural Württemberg. Thomas Müller traces the development of psychiatric provision in the South-Western institution Zwiëfalten from its early beginnings after secularisation in 1812 to the tragic impact of National Socialism on the fate of patients. The chapter of Monika

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Ankele highlights the central role attributed to the ability to work inside and outside mental institutions. Ankele notes, that the “aims of work therapy resonated strongly with social and political mores that lay beyond the realm of the merely medical.” (243) The chapter of Sonja Hinsch complements Ankele’s and other chapters. It examines how different kinds of work and non-work were conceptualised during the interwar period in Austria, especially exploring forced labour facilities.

The following five chapters focus on the meanings and development of patient work in Britain. Sarah Chaney’s chapter notes for Britain an increased focus on the rehabilitative dimension of patient work from the 1870s to 1914. The chapter of Oonagh Walsh look at work in the Irish District Asylum during the late 19th century. Walsh highlights the importance of the wider socioeconomic and political context in relation to medical practice and the status of patient work. John Hall shows the progress of patient work after the First World War in Britain; Vicky Long’s chapter dedicates to the development of employment in British psychiatric care after 1959. Jennifer Law invites analyses methodologically sophisticated two case scenarios from the early 19th and early 21st century with regard to reason and relation in the work cure. Law’s chapter rounds off skilfully this anthology.

The work analyses in depth broad historical questions, like the impact of colonialism and communism as well as the effect of the World Wars. Throughout the book, the authors illustrate exemplarily the daily routine of mental patient in psychiatric institutions. A comprehensive variety of models of intra- and extra institutional patient work is shown. Simultaneously the volume presents an alternative history of the emergence of occupational therapy. The well-structured book is written very clearly, reasonably priced, nicely laid out and also offers among others relevant image material.

Overall, this volume is an eye-opener. It breaks new ground in clarifying questions of history of psychiatry by focusing on the role of work in mental-health institutions. It contains some first-rate chapters for historians of medicine and psychiatry, social and economic historians and sociologists. It will also inform students, healthcare professionals and, hopefully, the administrators of medical institutions.

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