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Book Review: Clinical Psychiatry in Imperial Germany: A History of Psychiatric Practice

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modestly rather than to fabricate a line (or life) out of our imagined sense of connection (p. 20). It is a testament to the sympathetic intelligence of Barham's work that he alerts us to the urgency of such empathic reconstructions while at the same time leaving us deeply uneasy as to political costs involved.

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Note

1. Published in *Collected Poems of Ivor Gurney*, edited by P. J. Kavanagh (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2004), 128–9; reprinted with the publisher's permission (www.carcanet.co.uk).

Eric Engstrom. **Clinical Psychiatry in Imperial Germany: A History of Psychiatric Practice.** *Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003.* Pp. xii + 295. ISBN 0-8014-4195-1.

Eric Engstrom's *Clinical Psychiatry in Imperial Germany* offers an account of the emergence of psychiatric modernity that is at once conventional, focused on major figures and institutions, and refreshingly original. Using a lightly Foucauldian framework to trace the consolidation of what he calls new economies of power and knowledge, Engstrom focuses not only on the theoretical and conceptual innovations that will be familiar to specialists but also, in a highly innovative vein, on the nitty-gritty of psychiatric practice at ground level; for example, he devotes several pages to Emil Kraepelin's adoption of a system employing diagnostic cards, like those used by Bavarian census takers, that allowed him to track efficiently the course of each patient's disease, even after discharge from his clinic. With this small but telling detail, Engstrom establishes that Kraepelin's research methodology, directed at establishing the temporal course of mental diseases, was rigorously statistical in orientation. Just as significantly, he observes that the research depended on access to a robust and steady supply of patient material, and links this to Kraepelin's encouragement of ever-greater numbers of admitted patients. In addition, he shows how, in the crowded conditions of the clinic, prognosis – which would come to be among the hallmarks of Kraepelinean psychiatry – was to be established earlier and earlier, from four weeks after admission to, finally and perhaps improbably, on the day of admission. Throughout the book there are many similarly striking instances of taken-for-granted research practices subjected to illuminating analysis. The methodological payoff for the historian in all this is a much deeper appreciation for the intertwining of psychiatric research and knowledge with carceral practices in the context of state policy than almost any other history of psychiatry has yet provided.

The most compelling narrative line in Engstrom's study traces the displacement of the asylum by the university psychiatric clinic, of the custodial by the curative institution, of the alienist by the psychiatrist (with a few of the more privileged holding university professorships in psychiatry), in an uneven process that had its roots in the 1870s. Laboratory and clinical investigation occupied the new psychiatrist, who fashioned himself first and foremost a research scientist. Inspired by Wilhelm Griesinger's conviction that 'mental diseases were brain diseases', proponents of the newly academic and scientific psychiatry created a new kind of psychiatric observer in the laboratory. They honed their visual faculties, learning to see anew, on surveillance wards. They instructed students in hospital wards and university lecture halls, training generations of 'psychiatric sentinals' to be alert to signs of mental deviance in any setting. Concurrently, they defined a broader social mission for their discipline, as they established outpatient polyclinics that did a brisk business in electrotherapeutic treatments, while expanding the discipline's reach to include borderline cases.

Engstrom treats in turn each of these sites in which the new generation of psychiatrists practised. Particularly interesting is his account of the newly important basic sciences such as pathological anatomy, which called for new modes of scientific perception. This is exemplified by the microscope, which in the words of one enthusiast would allow for 'total transparency of all spatial objects and therewith full awareness of all visible things', and demanded disciplined training of the eye as well as means to establish consensus on what exactly it was that was observed. Microscopy also depended on specimens culled from cadavers, which in cities might be available but in small towns were in chronic short supply. Free clinic beds, which Engstrom notes served as a 'death row' for terminal patients, were one solution to the shortage. One clinic director went so far as to draw up a 'cadaver policy' (*Politik der Leichen*) that stipulated terminal patients could not be removed from his institution, ensuring it a constant supply of pathoanatomic material. Laboratory scientists were thus beholden to the institutional, financial and legal mechanisms that governed the supply of cadavers. All this makes for fascinating reading, offering as it does a resolutely materialist account of the conditions under which scientists negotiated the day-to-day of practice. Engstrom points out that they and their institutions were hardly the 'panoptic utopias' of Foucault but were instead embedded in contingent, politically negotiated webs of interests and control.

Based on assiduous archival research, Engstrom's book is a model of sober and reasoned analysis, punctuated by fascinating and uniformly well-observed explorations into the texture – the conditions, the demands, the constraints – of psychiatric practice; this will engage anyone interested in psychiatry's on-the-ground history. There is nothing of patients in his account. Yet, Engstrom succeeds admirably in sketching the process by which German psychiatrists created a new sort of scientific persona for the

modern psychiatrist in a book which will be of interest to a broad range of specialists.

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Zvi Lothane. **Seelenmord und Psychiatrie – Zur Rehabilitierung Schrebers**. Gießen, Germany: Psychosozial Verlag, 2004. Pp. 668. ISBN 3-89806-242-2. € 49.

Zvi Lothane's successful attempt to rehabilitate Paul Schreber (1842–1911) was published in English in 1992: *In Defence of Schreber: Soul Murder and Psychiatry*. The book has now been expanded and updated by the author, partially edited by Werner Felber and Hartmut Raguse, and translated into German. The original version was received as a well-researched, detailed account of Schreber's hospitalization and its historical context, and of the interpretations of his autobiographical account, *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken* (1903/2003).

This revised German translation differs from the American version, not in argument but in highlighting the central arguments, in additional detail, and in the updated literature on Schreber. The only chapter that has undergone a major expansion is the introduction. Here, Lothane helps the reader to find a way through the vast historical account in the following chapters by highlighting four myths which he intends to dismantle in the book: (1) that Freud first developed his theory of paranoia as being motivated as a defence against homosexual desires when interpreting Schreber's autobiographical monograph; (2) that Schreber merited the diagnosis of 'paranoia' (instead of depression); (3) that Schreber had a dominant homosexual orientation which would have motivated paranoia, instead of fears of homosexual attacks developing in the wake of an already evolving psychosis; (4) that Schreber's psychosis resulted from the allegedly sadistic pedagogy of his father, Moritz Schreber – an interpretation suggested by Niederland (1984). Historical details have been added in various chapters, such as precise biographical dates of Schreber's extended family and of his judicial career. The autopsy report has been added to the clinical notes. Sometimes references to other thinkers are added, for instance, when comparing some of Schreber's ideas with those of Martin Buber and Harry Stack Sullivan. Finally, the interesting chapter on interpretations of Schreber has been expanded, for example, by discussing in more detail Otto Gross's early reception of Schreber's book. Also, Lothane points out that Freud's interpretation of paranoia as a defence against homosexual fantasies predated his interpretation of Schreber and was translated into a correlation of manifest homosexuality and paranoia by many later psychoanalysts.