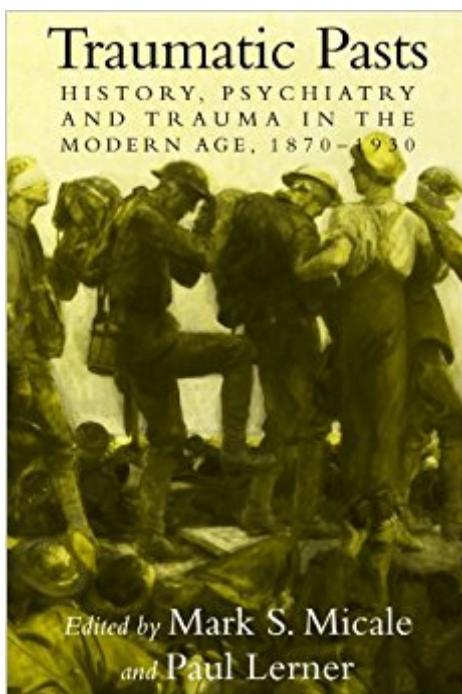


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# Traumatic Pasts: History, Psychiatry, And Trauma In The Modern Age, 1870-1930 (Cambridge Studies In The History Of Medicine)



## Synopsis

Trauma--the psychological consequences of wars, accidents and abuse--has become the subject of heated debate among doctors, psychologists, and lay critics (and activists) in recent years. The essays in this book trace the origins of these debates in medicine and culture in modern Europe and America. They cover medical and cultural aspects of experiences understood to be "traumatic" from rail and factory accidents in the later nineteenth century through the First World War and its aftermath.

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## Customer Reviews

"Mark Micale and Paul Lerner have edited a very valuable collection of essays. The scholarship presented here successfully challenges the notion of a single, uniform, transhistorical and trans-cultural concept of psychological trauma, and repeatedly demonstrates the relevance of time, place and culture to our understanding of its manifestations. Familiar histories that conflate the discovery of the unconscious and of the significance of trauma with the advent of Freud and psychoanalysis are shown to be misleading and incomplete. And our current crop of psychosocial traumas is firmly placed in a larger historical frame." The Times Literary Supplement "Mark Micale and Paul Lerner, both historians of psychiatry, have assembled a welcome collection of essays. They offer an antidote to our over-romantic and ahistorical view of what is the key period in the history of trauma--the birth of the modern--from the end of the 19th century to the aftermath of the

Great War. . . . Each of the essays in this collection is a gem." British Medical Journal "This powerful book offers the best in the historical scholarship about trauma. It is very thoroughly researched and the number of multilingual sources used for every essay demonstrates an admirable knowledge of literature in the field. Recommended for academic libraries, especially those with programs in psychology, health sciences and history." E-Stream "It is by and large a good book that should be valued for bringing together much scholarship on its chosen subject." Canadian Literature "With the publication of *Traumatic Pasts*, it can be unequivocally stated that the historical study of trauma has entered a state of maturity. The authors locate the origins of the modern concept of trauma in a variety of medical discourses between 1870 and 1930 dealing with railway accidents, industrial accidents, violence and abuse, social insurance, and modern warfare. All chapters are of a high caliber and advance recent scholarship in their respective areas. . . . The authors of *Traumatic Pasts* have demonstrated that it is not possible to gain an understanding of the complexities of the trauma concept when social, political, and historical factors are not taken into account. The detailed, well-researched, and exceedingly well-theorized essays add a tremendous amount of material to existing historical research as well as to current debates about the nature of trauma." History Workshop "At last scholars interested in the subject of trauma have a collection of interdisciplinary essays representing both the most thorough research and the most incisive thinking in the field. This indispensable book will move the discussion of trauma beyond fashionable metaphor to historical documentation." Elaine Showalter, Princeton University "Traumatic Pasts is a major leap in the study of trauma as a historical concept. Reaching from the train accidents of the 19th century through shell shock and World War I, this volume of new and fascinating essays provides the context for our modern understanding of trauma. Much has been written about trauma over the past decades as if it were a contemporary phenomenon without its own history. That history is now elegantly supplied by Mark Micale and Paul Lerner." Sander L. Gilman, The American Academy in Berlin "At last a survey of the history of trauma which is genuinely international, and which gives peace-time experiences their due significance alongside the horrors of war. *Traumatic Pasts* does not merely deliver an abundance of exciting new research; it brings a much-needed balance to a hysterized subject." Roy Porter, Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine at University College "In place of the mythic, familiar, and taken-for-granted, we find a book that is filled with provocative discoveries, and that will open the way for many of us to new perspectives." Allan Young, McGill University "In line with the general orientation of this important volume, I think (it) will teach us a lot about the twentieth century and ourselves." Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences

Trauma the psychological consequences of wars, accidents and abuse has become the subject of heated debate among doctors, psychologists, and lay critics (and activists) in recent years. The essays in this book trace the origins of these debates in medicine and culture in modern Europe and America. They cover medical and cultural aspects of experiences understood to be "traumatic" from rail and factory accidents in the later nineteenth century through the First World War and its aftermath.

Micale's and Lerner's anthology of essays on the historical development of the concept of trauma in the modern age is a superb addition to the literature. Beginning with the editors' introduction and throughout all of the individual pieces in the book, the authors display a command of the field and a depth of knowledge about trauma in history that is hard to find anywhere else. The essays are exceptionally well written, and cover an interesting array of subjects, from more traditional histories of "shell shock" as a precursor to traumatic psychological injury to the less frequently examined historical origins of the concept of sexual trauma. Despite the expense of the volume, it is well worth adding to the shelf for anyone (academics, professionals, and lay reader alike) interested in understanding the historical underpinnings of the burgeoning field of trauma studies.

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