

Smith Ely Jelliffe



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Smith Ely Jelliffe (1866-1945). American neurologist, psychiatrist, and psychoanalyst who lived and practiced in New York City nearly his entire life. Originally trained in botany and pharmacy, Jelliffe switched first to neurology in the mid-1890s then to psychiatry, neuropsychiatry, and ultimately to psychoanalysis. He received his M.D. from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University. Dr. Jelliffe was the Clinical Professor of Mental Diseases at Fordham University, president of the New York Psychiatric Society, the New York Neurological Society, and the American Psychopathological Association, and editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases*. He was also a corresponding member of the French and Brazilian neurological societies and author of more than four hundred articles. His book, *The Modern Treatment of Nervous and Mental Diseases*, which he co-authored with William White, has been a classic in the field, with many reprintings. Dr. Jelliffe founded *Psychoanalytic Review*, the first English-language publication devoted to psychoanalysis. In it, he wrote a number of articles on psychoanalytic technique, daydreams, and transference. Dr. Jelliffe is also credited with important contributions in the field of psychosomatic medicine. These were collected in his *Sketches in Psychosomatic Medicine*.

One of the earliest Freudian adherents in the United States, Jelliffe (with the aid of his rarely attributed first wife, Helena Leeming Jelliffe, who died in 1916) produced after the turn-of-the-century numerous translations of European works in psychopathology, neurology, psychiatry, and psychotherapy. From about 1902 he owned and edited for the next forty years the influential *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*. In 1907 he, along with his from then on lifelong collaborator, William Alanson White, founded and edited the *Nervous and Mental*

Disease Monograph Series, which published the earliest translations of Freud, Jung, Adler, and other European psychoanalysts, as well as monographs in psychiatry and neurology.

With White, Jelliffe founded in 1913 *The Psychoanalytic Review*, a quite heterodox journal (as it still is) that was the first English-language analytic journal. Long after they had seceded from orthodox Freudianism the *Review* continued to publish translations of work by dissidents such as C. G. Jung and Alfred Adler.

His and White's *Diseases of the Nervous System: A Text-Book of Neurology and Psychiatry* (1915, 6th edition 1933) was a standard period textbook that was also the first American textbook to devote substantial space to psychopathology and psychoanalysis (all of part three in the first edition dealt with "psychic or symbolic systems"). Jelliffe's 1918 *The Technique of Psychoanalysis* was the first book in any language explicitly devoted to analytic technique. Jelliffe is also regarded as one of the founders of psychosomatic medicine in America. He began publishing papers about it as early as 1916, though his only book explicitly on the subject was his 1939 *Sketches in Psychosomatic Medicine*.

Not an important theoretician in any of the fields in which he practiced, Jelliffe was significant more as a behind-the-scenes mover, especially through his translations and the serials that he owned and edited. In addition Jelliffe was probably the first notable, self-identified American book collector in neuroscience, psychiatry, and psychoanalysis. He amassed an enormous library of books, journals, and offprints (well over ten tons in weight), which must surely have been the largest and most important collection in private hands in North America in the early 20th century. Sadly, Jelliffe's savings were wiped out by the stock market crash in 1929, so he was forced to continue working into his eighties. In 1942 he sold the bulk of his book and journal collection to *The Institute for Living* in Hartford, though he still retained thousands of books, which Nolan D. C. Lewis inherited after Jelliffe's death.

References

The principal sources for Jelliffe's life are John C. Burnham and William McGuire's *Jelliffe: American Psychoanalyst and Physician & His Correspondence with Sigmund Freud and C. G. Jung* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); and Nolan D. C. Lewis's "Smith Ely Jelliffe 1866-1945: Psychosomatic Medicine in America," pages 224-234 in Franz Alexander et al.'s *Psychoanalytic Pioneers* (New York: Basic Books, 1966).

See also

- Sigmund Freud
- Carl Jung
- Herbert Silberer