

BARAHONA FERNANDES: A HELMSMAN IN THE 20TH CENTURY PORTUGUESE PSYCHIATRY

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Introduction: Barahona Fernandes (1907-1992) is considered one of the most distinguished portuguese psychiatrists and perhaps the most known outside the country. He did part of his studies in Germany, under orientation of prominent professors such as Carl Kleist and Kurt Schneider, and got contact with the philosophic theories of Karl Jaspers and Nicolai Hartmann. In Portugal, he led the Lisbon University Clinic where he developed his countless studies on mental health.

Objectives: The authors shortly revisit the biography and some aspects of Barahona Fernandes' works.

Aims: This communication points out the singularities of his personality and work, and draws attention to the importance of his contributions on mental health.

Methods: Review of the literature concerning the author's publications and biography.

Results: Through his whole work emerges the effort in a "converging view" that tries to integrate different influences and perspectives, in order to better achieve a coherent explanation of the human being. One of his theoretical models discusses the Personality - "Personalidade em Situação" - in which he describes a complex organization based on communicating hierarchical layers (from a biological foundation to a more noologic apex), subject to the interaction with the environmental features, in a homeostatic balance that can be disturbed.

Conclusions: The unique work of Barahona Fernandes constitutes an important material to apprehend the psychic experience. His "converging" theories try to capture a multi-dimensional structure of the human being and help clinicians to get a deeper understanding on the process of getting mentally ill.