

Review of the book *Hildegard Peplau: Psychiatric nurse of the century*

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HILDEGARD PEPLAU: PSYCHIATRIC NURSE
OF THE CENTURY (2002)

Barbara J. Callaway New York: Springer ISBN: 0-8261-3882-9 Reviewed by *Mona Shattell, PhD, RN, BC*

Barbara Callaway's new biography *Hildegard Peplau: Psychiatric Nurse of the Century* is a well-written important contribution to nursing. The book chronicles the life of Hildegard Peplau, the "mother of psychiatric nursing," and concomitantly educates the reader about nursing history and nursing politics. The author's goals were achieved if her goals were to enlighten, educate, and stimulate.

Currently, Callaway is professor and graduate placement chair in the Political Science Department at Rutgers University. She has written numerous books and articles on women and politics in West Africa and she is currently working on a book about the politics of nursing, reviewing material that Hilda gave her for this endeavor.

Hildegard Peplau: Psychiatric Nurse of the Century opens with a foreword by Grayce Sills, followed by an author's note and introduction. Callaway organized the book into categories of Peplau's life, starting with An American Childhood; Becoming a Nurse; and A Nurse Goes to College. She then moved into the various stages of Peplau's career— World War II: Coming Into Her Own; Transitions, Graduate Studies and Motherhood Too; Teachers College; Beginning a Career; Academic Nightmare: A Career in Crisis; Rutgers: "A Formidable Woman;" Summers on the Road; and Rutgers: The Traveling Years. The structure of the following few chapters relate to her involvement in the profession and the professional organization, the American Nurses Association (ANA) and includes the following chapter titles: Vision of the Profession; ANA: The Professional Challenge; and ANA: The Professional Nightmare. The final two chapters are entitled Retirement: Psychiatric Nurse of the Century and Conclusion: Well Done.

Hildegard Peplau: Psychiatric Nurse of the Century is biographical and historical. Callaway's writing style is clear and easy to read. Undoubtedly, the writing of the book was the result of countless hours collecting data. The abundant data was used well to relay the story of Hildegard Peplau's life. The author's voice was present in the writing but muted, allowing Peplau to remain in the main role.

Hildegard Peplau: Psychiatric Nurse of the Century does not overlook the more difficult parts of Hildegard's personality, which, in part, adds to the author's credibility. As said by Callaway, "Hilda wanted her life story told and that could not be done in any way that would honestly portray her life without describing events in a manner that some may find unusually forthright and candid (p. x)." Forthright and candid are qualities both Callaway and Peplau shared. An aspect of the book that was somewhat awkward was that the organization of the book by topic (areas of Peplau's life) did not always follow in chronological order. At times when a new topic was introduced (new chapter or subchapter), the reader had to go back in time, thus lending to some perceptual ambiguity. The organization that at first appeared sequential in nature, later turned out to be somewhat fluid. The sequence of life events according to time ceased to be the case in a few areas of the book, which became somewhat discordant from the apparent clear time-line of life events. While the organization is somewhat anomalous, it does not detract from the author's purpose of informing the reader of Hildegard Peplau's life.

Overall, I highly recommend *Hildegard Peplau: Psychiatric Nurse of the Century*, especially if you are interested in nursing history, the history of psychiatric nursing, or in the life of Hildegard Peplau. Not only was the book informative, it was inspirational. For graduate students in psychiatric/mental health nursing, it should be required.