

Emese Lafferton: Hungarian Psychiatry, Society and Politics in the Long Nineteenth Century. Palgrave Macmillan. Cham 2022. XVIII, 443 S. ISBN 978-3-030-85705-9. (€ 109,-.)

The volume under review here addresses several interrelated and less-developed dimensions of historicization: the critical history of psychiatry, the inception of public health in East Central Europe, and the interrelation of welfare policy and nation-building. Choosing the nineteenth century as a timeline to frame her historical reconstruction, Emese Lafferton succeeds in interconnecting public health and psychiatry, as well as the movement from the Ancien Régime to modern, institutionalized, centralized, and professionalized medicine. She recognizes the impact of the long-term competition between two main approaches to historicizing innovation in medicine, namely medical culture and medicalization, and current attempts to bring them together. Historicizing public health through the lens of medical culture, an influential method predominantly developed by French and British historians,¹ involves an exploration of “those complex ways that doctors sought to explain their socio-political universe through bio-medical language.”² The instrumental task of applying a medical culture approach lies in examining the complex factors that provide “the foundation for members of a society to perceive and to interpret health and illness.”³ A medicalization approach has developed within the historicization of medicine and psychiatry in the German-speaking space since the 1960s, exploring the “consolidation of psychiatry as a distinct medical field, along with the description and categorization of the majority of psychiatric disorders that we still recognize today.”⁴ In contrast to a medical culture approach, historicization through the lens of medicalization posits changes in medical practices as imposed from above.

L. most consistently applies a medical culture approach for Chapter 3, “The Bourgeois Family World of the Private Asylum: The Schwartz Enterprise from 1850,” Chapter 4, “The Kingdom in Miniature: Public Mental Asylums from the 1860s,” and Chapter 6, “Fragmenting Institutional Landscape: Alternatives of Specialised Institutions, Colonies and Family Care on the Turn-of-the-Century.” These chapters deal with the complex and internally contradictory dissemination of psychiatric treatment during the second half of the nineteenth century. L. provides a complex view through consistent critical revision of the differences among practitioners’ intentions, legal regulations, and practices. In all three chapters, she creates an impressive picture of the challenges around the acceptance of innovations and the ways in which psychiatrists dealt with them. Her discussion of the innovations introduced by various professional groups, and of the resistance to them on the part of other groups, introduces readers to a remarkable example of Hungarian medical culture with a focus on the institutionalization of psychiatry as a product of negotiation between the state, professionals, and the public. Examining the impact of national literature and theater on the formation of public views concerning mental health, along with a consistent focus on mass media responses to various local innovations, would have rein-

¹ The echo of two most consistent implementations of the medical culture approach (CHRISTOPHER LAWRENCE: *Medicine and the Making of Modern Britain, 1700–1920*, London 1994; ANN LA BERGE, MORDECHAI FEINGOLD: *French Medical Culture in the Nineteenth Century*, Leiden 1994) are recognizable in the introductory part.

² SEAN QUINLAN: *Physical and Moral Regeneration after the Terror: Medical Culture, Sensibility and Family Politics in France, 1794–1804*, in: *Social History* 29 (2004), 2, pp. 139–164, here p. 142.

³ FRANCISCA LOETZ: *Why Change Habits? Early Modern Medical Innovation between Medicalisation and Medical Culture*, in: *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* 32 (2010), 4, pp. 453–473, here p. 455.

⁴ VASIA LEKKA: *Mapping the Relations between History and History of Science: The Case of the History of Psychiatry*, in: *Rethinking History* 21 (2017), 4, pp. 606–617, here p. 609.

forced this part of the text with a more nuanced depiction of the public acceptance of psychiatry. The remainder of the book, Chapters 5, 7 and 8, move in a different direction, mostly focusing on medicalization.

Chapter 5, “The University Clinic and the Birth of Biological Psychiatry: Academic Research, Teaching and Therapy from the 1880s,” reconstructs the formation of the medical elite through the creation and promotion of psychiatry as part of medical science. L. convincingly demonstrates the many driving forces behind the institutionalization of the clinical approach as a means for achieving medical power. The addition of a discussion on disseminating sedatives, due to the development of national pharmacology, as a factor in shaping psychiatric taxonomies and medicalization would better bridge this part of book with Chapters 7 and 8, which are not very successful in exploring psychiatric treatment as a part of medicalizing public life.

Chapter 7, entitled “Asylum Statistics and the Psycho-Social Reality of the Hungarian Kingdom,” directly addresses the fact that “the complex analysis of sociological parameters of the mental patient population underlines the differences of the degree of ‘modernisation’ and ‘medicalisation’ among various social groups” (p. 292). L. seeks to deny any connection between the population’s involvement in psychiatric treatment and gender, age, or ethnicity, in favor of emphasizing the role of social status. The methodological instruments based on descriptive statistics, chosen to demonstrate her assertion, which denies the role of intersectionality in the medicalization of public life, are questionable. Considering the fact that an insignificant percentage of the population was treated by psychiatrists, a fact that the author herself brings up, the choice of this strategy is perplexing. Even more puzzling is the further interpretation of statistical data, based solely on a direct comparison among the proportions of different groups of patients. For instance, L. claims that, among patients, the proportion of those who were married exceeded the proportion of single patients (p. 304). But if we take into account the fact that only less than a third of the population was not married, then the conclusion based on a simple comparison of the proportions of patients who are married and not, does not look reliable. It is also not entirely clear why only marriage is considered a criterion for family status—many patients may still have been living with their parents or may have lived with siblings.

Comparable doubts stem from the statements regarding the insignificance of gender-specific data (pp. 302–303). Similarly, seeking to deny the role of ethnicity, L. teeters on the verge of reproducing racial assimilationism. On the one hand, she suggests that, like anthropology, psychiatry “served the integrative function of historical assimilation rather than fulfilling a divisive strategy in ethnic differentiation,” (p. 296). On the other hand, she then attributes to Jews a greater degree of “enlightenment” compared with other population groups, claiming that they possessed a willingness and consciousness that led them to seek psychiatric assistance (p. 307).

The next chapter, “Invading the Public and the Private: The Hygiene of Everyday Life, Shell-Shock and the Politics of Turn-of-the-Century Psychiatric Expertise,” also exhibits some weaknesses. Although in previous chapters, there are a few examples of the author’s uncertain and unclear handling of historical concepts like “alienist,” in the last chapter, the imprecise use of terminology leads one to consider the gaps in the historicization of the main theoretical debates in that period. The position of one of the practitioners is described as the “conciliation of organicist and psychist approaches” (p. 372), and the reader is left to decipher whether the author actually believes the two approaches are in opposition or not. L. combines Darwinism, Lamarckism, and eugenic thinking, ignoring the contention between Darwin’s and Lamarck’s theories of evolution during that period and its role in constructing the very idea of mental health; likewise, the difference between Darwinism and Social Darwinism is elided. These manifold inaccuracies result in a less comprehensive historicization through the prism of medicalization and block the author from developing a comprehensive methodology that would link the analysis of ideas and institutions.

The book's concluding chapter, which primarily represents a summary of the book, also misses the opportunity to discuss the complexities of combining different optics for historicizing ideas and institutions in their interconnection. In the internal methodological conflict of L.'s book, the reader who is familiar with recent attempts to build "glocalized" historical narratives of public health easily recognizes a call for the "demodernization" of historical approaches utilizing medical culture in favor of a more nuanced depiction of the "fruitful dialogue between the discourses of history and history of psychiatry."⁵

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⁵ Ibid., p.608.

Interkulturalität, Übersetzung, Literatur. Das Beispiel der Prager Moderne. Hrsg. von Dieter Heimböckel, Steffen Höhne und Manfred Weinberg. (Intellektuelles Prag im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert, Bd. 19.) Böhlau. Wien – Köln 2022. 422 S., Ill. ISBN 978-3-412-52364-0. (€ 65,-)

Fruchtbare Diskussionen über das multilinguale, konfessionelle und kulturelle Umfeld der Prager Moderne wurden zuletzt von der Konferenz „Franz Kafka im interkulturellen Kontext“ im Dezember 2016 in Prag initiiert. Nun liegt der Tagungsband zur Folgetagung „Interkulturalität, Übersetzung, Literatur – am Beispiel der Prager Moderne“ im Oktober 2019 in Prag vor, der das Augenmerk auf weitere Autoren richtet und die Bedeutung der Interkulturalität für ihr Leben und Schreiben untersucht. Zudem werden die Aspekte der Vermittlung und Übersetzung von Literatur analysiert.

Während das Faszinosum der Prager deutschsprachigen Literatur und Kultur traditionell entweder mit der Isolationsthese bzw. dem Distinktionsmodell einerseits oder dem Symbiose-Modell andererseits zu erklären versucht wurde, schließen sich die hier versammelten Beiträge keinem dieser Gegensätze an, sondern arbeiten komplexe kulturelle, soziale und sprachliche Interdependenzen heraus.

Zunächst werden diverse interkulturelle Verflechtungen im Werk Franz Kafkas näher beleuchtet. So untersucht Achim Küpper den Zusammenhang von Brücken, Strömen und Abgründen im Werk Franz Kafkas. Im Bild der Brücke, das häufig eine Scharnierfunktion an Ein- oder Ausgängen Kafka'scher Texte übernimmt, erkennt er eine paradoxe Figur des Übergangs, die ein adäquates Beschreibungsmodell von Kafkas Schaffen darstellt. Hansjörg Bay wirft die Frage auf, warum kulturelle Unterschiede nicht tiefer in die von Kafka erzählten Geschichten eingeschrieben sind. Er konstatiert stattdessen eine Verhandlung von Kultur als solcher und der Auflösung aller kulturellen Ordnung und Identität. Manfred Weinberg kritisiert in ironischer Form die „Kafkologie“, die Kafkas Texte durch allegorische Deutung plausibel auszulegen sucht. Kafkas Schriften entziehen sich jedoch jeglicher Form der Interpretation, indem sie prinzipiell die Möglichkeiten des Verstehens von „etwas“ verhandeln und einen grundlegenden Ausbruch aus dem „Denken wie üblich“ darstellen. Ulrich Stadler stellt die strukturelle Verwandtschaft von Kafkas poetischer Prosa und Pablo Picassos kubistischen Bildern um 1912 dar. Beide Künstler greifen den Gegensatz von Präsenz und Repräsentanz auf und subvertieren ihn; beide kennzeichnen eine ausgeprägte Ambivalenz der Bilder. Dieter Heimböckel beschreibt die Wirkungsgeschichte der Dramatisierung von Kafkas *Das Schloss* durch Max Brod für die Bühne in den 1950er Jahren und hinterfragt kritisch den Nutzen oder Schaden solcher Dramatisierungen. Marie-Odile Thirouin untersucht die Einschreibung jüdischer Spurenelemente in Texten von Schriftstellern, die gar keinen oder nur noch einen eingeschränkten Zugang zu ihrem jüdischen Erbe haben, am Beispiel von Franz Kafkas Fragment *Eine Kreuzung* (1917) und erkennt darin eine moderne Form des Marranismus.

Ein zweiter Schwerpunkt zeichnet die spezifische Interkulturalität Prags und der Böhmisches Länder in der Moderne an weiteren, zum Teil auch weniger bekannten Prager deutschsprachigen und tschechischen Schriftstellern nach. Thomas Schneider widmet