MADNESS, RELIGION AND THE STATE IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE

From the ideological crucible of the Reformation emerged an embittered contest for the human soul. In the care of souls, the clergy zealously dispensed spiritual physic – for countless early modern Europeans, the first echelon of mental health care. During its heyday, spiritual physic touched the lives of thousands, from penitents and pilgrims to demoniacs and mad persons. Ironically, the phenomenon remains largely unexplored. Why?

Through case histories from among the records of more than a thousand troubled and desperate individuals, this regional study of Bavaria investigates spiritual physic as a popular ritual during a tumultuous era of religious strife, material crises, moral repression and witch-hunting. By the mid-seventeenth century, secular forces ushered in a psychological revolution across Europe. However, spiritual physic ensconced itself by proxy upon emergent bourgeois psychiatry. Today, its remnants raise haunting questions about science and the pursuit of objective knowledge in the ephemeral realm of human consciousness.

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A Bavarian Beacon

DAVID LEDERER

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For Max

Fearlessly the idiot faced the crowd,
Smi-i-i-i-i-iling.
Merciless the magistrate turns round,
Fro-o-o-o-o-owning.
And who's the fool who wears the crown?

David Gilmour and Roger Waters, *Fearless*

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Preface

This book explores the obscure origins of modern psychology and psychiatry in early modern Europe. Specifically, it investigates regional practices and beliefs employing interdisciplinary tools from the history of medicine, cultural anthropology and religious sociology in addition to traditional historical methods. Given that readers may come from other areas of interest, a basic introduction is offered here simply to clarify certain underlying assumptions. Obviously, its brevity requires indulging in some crude generalizations. Persons already familiar with the early modern period or the history of psychology/psychiatry may therefore find this preamble largely superfluous and can skip it entirely without the slightest danger of miscomprehension.

As the expression suggests, the early modern period in Europe (broadly defined as the years from 1450 to 1789) witnessed the birth of philosophies, inventions and institutional practices regularly associated with standard definitions of modernity and progress. For historians of ideas, these include the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. As regards technological advances, science recognizes innovations like the printing press, the magnetic compass and the telescope, to mention but a few. Scholars of religion point to the consequences of the Reformation and the Catholic reform movements for social and political development in the West. Sociologists invoke the appearance of systematized bureaucracies, mass culture and rationalization as symbols of modernity. In the grander scheme of things presumably progressive, all these developments moved history forward at various levels. Ultimately, the presumption of a modern civilization remains one of something qualitatively unique and different from preceding eras.

Until the First World War, this understanding of modernity pinned the hopes of humankind on the ideals of material, social and intellectual progress. Accordingly, Western civilization confidently accepted certain goal orientations – the consolidation of the nation state with a secure monopoly of violence based in law rather than superstition, the eradication

of disease and the achievement of material prosperity. The history of the twentieth century, the cruelest on record for its inhumanity, sorely tested positivist aspirations. On the one hand, the Great Wars and the Holocaust, not to mention continuing threats of nuclear annihilation, recurrent genocide, unforeseeable global pandemics, terrorism and economic instability, have sorely vexed blind faith in human progress as teleological or unidirectional. On the other hand, unconditional surrender to the vagaries of absolute relativism is, at best, oxymoronic and dilettantish, at worst – as more recent events clearly demonstrate – patently dangerous. No one seriously disputes how novel technologies extend life expectancy (at least in some societies) and make living more comfortable. Things are less clear, however, when operating in subjective arenas such as quality of life or normalcy, for example, requiring subtle value judgments that defy simple quantification. Healthy skepticism and sober debate over the precise nature of progress as intrinsically good and unidirectional ("damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead," as Farragut said) is clearly in the public interest. In order to conduct effective public debate, we require evidence. Technical studies like this one contribute empirical and circumstantial evidence, anecdotal examples and cognitive models for evaluation and the formation of informed, rather than intuitive, value judgments. Though not necessarily an exhortation to conservatism, this approach certainly favors erring on the side of caution in our critical reflection of where we are now and how we came to be here. Therein rests the merit of the humanities in general and history in particular.

For example, psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis are remarkably complex and controversial disciplines worthy of historical investigation. Their story is too often presented in extremes: either as one of unfettered and heroic progress from the nineteenth century onwards or, alternatively, as verification of omnipresent repression and abuses of power in a nightmarish post-modern society embodied in Edvard Munch's *The Scream*. I subscribe exclusively to neither view. However, if one defines psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis as modern disciplines, then (not unlike modern banking practices) it seems prudent to seek their genesis in the *early* modern period. In fact, the terms "psychology" and "psychiatry" first emerged in the sixteenth century, the OED notwithstanding.

Logic recommends an examination of early modern developments as potentially relevant to our ability to understand current institutions and practices. Early modern history also allows us to contextualize with a measure of detachment. Although disconcerting issues are raised in this study – the role of political exigency, religious ethics, social norms and public

perceptions in the genealogy of scientific knowledge – no major drug contracts, sweeping institutional reforms, redundancies or recommendations for the confinement of abnormal behavioral types ride explicitly on its outcome. Hence, I submit the following argument for your critical consideration. Although focused on the regional analysis of one highly specialized form of early modern mental health care, it presents a trenchant and compelling story with broader historical significance.

Initially, this book began as a village reconstitution of a local cult shrine dedicated to the treatment of madness in southeastern Germany. Gradually, its course changed and I pursued ceaseless meanderings with inquisitive wonder. A book is a journey no author completes alone. At its end, custom obliges reflection on and thanks to colleagues, institutions, friends and loved ones for help along the way. Needless to say, so many munificent individuals contributed so many kindnesses that it would take more than a lifetime to repay them all in full. Hopefully, these acknowledgments offer some recompense, however slight.

Books are not written, they are produced, and several academic and philanthropic organizations indulged in financial and material support for this endeavor. The Fulbright Commission provided for an initial research stay of seventeen months in Munich, while the Volkswagen Foundation afforded an additional year for comparative study in Augsburg, hosted by the Institute for European Cultural History. The University of Massachusetts at Amherst and New York University awarded grants-in-aid and scholarships. The German Academic Exchange Service facilitated a return visit to Munich, hosted by the Max-Planck-Institute for Psychiatry. The staffs of the Institute for Bavarian History, the Bavarian Central State Archives and the Bavarian State Library gave repeatedly of their time and facilities, the latter providing a study carrel for six months. At Cambridge University Press, I thank Michael Watson for his forbearance and collegiality over the past months, as well as Jackie Warren, Carol Fellingham Webb and the other members of the production staff for their industry and care. The administration of the National University of Ireland of Maynooth granted a leave of absence, patiently awaiting the end product.

To my academic mentors, Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, Hans-Christoph Rublack, Winfried Schulze and Walter Ziegler, I express deep respect for their sensible guidance over many years. Lyndal Roper and Wolfgang Behringer encouraged my efforts at every turn and suffered repeatedly through less felicitous versions of the present text. Other scholars tendered insightful critiques on portions thereof, including Tom Tentler, H. C. Erik

Midelfort and T. A. Brady. Sarah Ferber shared her ideas on demonic possessions. Among psychiatrists and their historians, Sono Shamdasani brought the medieval interests of Jung to my attention, as well as the true wonders of London: jazz, Fortnum & Mason's and the collection at the Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine. Zvi Lothane and Paul Vitz both proffered sound advice on Freud's affinity for the occult. In Munich, I thank Ferdinand Kramer and Joachim Wild for their collegial advice, as well as Walter Jaroschka for putting me through the ropes, paleographically speaking. Mathias Weber and Wolfgang Burgmair opened the doors of the former Kräpelin Institute for Psychiatry (now the Max-Planck-Institute) for my investigations into the Heinrich-Laehr Collection and the tastefully decorated cerebral museum. In Augsburg, Johannes Burckhardt and Wolfgang Weber deserve especially amiable mention for their contributions to a whole community of scholars. Energy and gentle prodding came from students, especially Georgina Laragy and Paul Clear at Maynooth and the participants at a Catholic University of America seminar on the history of medicine held in conjunction with the National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health. In spirit and memory remain three influential scholars: Heiko Obermann, Roy Porter and Bob Scribner. We are all poorer for the loss.

A number of dear friends deserve special mention. To my friend, Otto Feldbauer, who helped both personally and professionally, fond regards as always. Together with Eric Mader, Elisabeth Schepers and Stephan Breit, we engaged in heated historiographic debates at the Atzinger in Schellingstrasse many years before construction began on the *Historicum* across the street. Martin Ott continues to facilitate civilization, diplomacy and the long-distance transfer of materials selflessly and without hesitation. In Stuttgart and Tübingen, Sabina Holtz will recall the glory days of the *Oberseminar*. She and Stephan Zauner continue to tend the fire there. Claudia Stein has moved on to Warwick, Craig Koslofsky to Champaign-Urbana. In Augsburg, I joined for a time with a number of ex-pats and locals (not least among them Sibylle Backmann, Duane Corpis, Hans-Jörg Künast, Benedikt Maurer, Kathy Stuart and Ann Tlusty) in a fruitful and exciting renaissance of cultural history. To all my colleagues at the Department of History Maynooth, many thanks for welcoming a traveler into their midst without reservation, introducing me gently to the Celtic tiger. Ulinka Rublack, dear friend, provided important last-minute advice on the history of the emotions. To Paul Hebert, also a product of the MPP program for gifted children during another lifetime in North Tonawanda: Thanks

for reading the draft – who'd have guessed how things would turn out? Maktub.

Finally, to my parents and family, thanks for love and hope. Throughout, for better or worse, from beginning to end, Irene has accompanied me.

This journey is over, finished and done; another begins. Any errors are purely my own . . .

Cill Droichead

Abbreviations

ABA	*Archiv des Bistums Augsburg*
ADB	*Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*
AEM	*Archiv des Erzbistums München*
AMB	Anastasia Miracle Book
BayStaBi	*Bayerische Staatsbibliothek*
BB	*Benediktbeuern*
BlK	*Blechkasten*
Cgm	*Codex germanicus monacensis*
Clm	*Codex latinus monacensis*
DSM	*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM IV)*
EG	*Erscheinungen von Geistern*
Fasz.	*Faszikel*
Geist. Rat	*Geistlicher Rat*
GR	*General Register*
GW	Freud, Sigmund, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Anna Freud, 19 vols. (London, 1952–1987).
HGS	*Heiliggeistspital*
HK	*Hofkammer*
HR	*Kurbayern Hofrat*
HStAM	*Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv*
ICD	*The International Classification of Diseases*
Jes.	*Jesuitica*
KL	*Klosterliteralien*
KU	*Kloster Urkunde*
LaT	*Landesarchiv Tirol*
Thk	*Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*
MGH	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica*
PMB	Pürtner Miracle Book
RL	*Rentmeister Literalien*

RM	*Rentamt München*
SE	Freud, Sigmund, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey, 24 vols. (London, 1953–1974).
SStBA	*Staat- und Stadtsbibliothek Augsburg*
StAA	*Stadtsarchiv Augsburg*
StAM	*Staatsarchiv München*
UAM	*Universitätsarchiv München*
ZBLG	*Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte*
Zedler	Zedler, Johann Heinrich, *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexikon* (Halle & Leipzig, 1732–1754; reprint: Graz, 1964), 68 vols.

Plate 1. "Bavarian Beacon – St. Anastasia, Life and Martyrdom, Translation, Wonders and Good Deeds." St. Anastasia atop a lighthouse, her reliquary bust held by a monk to the upper right, below several sufferers including the mad, who pray for her help; a ship in peril, one of the signs of her martyrdom; the head of the devilish sea monster appears in their lower left; upper left, the monastery of Benediktbeuern.

From the title page of Aemilian Biechler, *Bayerischer Pharos: S. Anastasia von Gott in Obern-Bayern vor 600 Jahren in dem Closter Benedictbaiern angeszundet* . . . (Augsburg, 1663), copper etching by Bartholome Kilian. (Permission of the Bavarian State Library, Munich.)