

Indochina' was devoted to the history of medicine in colonial South-East Asia. On numerous occasions she presents cases taken from non-western contexts. If the core of the argument devoted to modern western medicine gives great importance to transatlantic states and relations, multiple examples are chosen from non-western countries to balance and question medicalization processes through the history of alternative medicine. A very good, short and informative introduction heads each chapter, thanks to a 'histoire-problème' often based on sociological and anthropological literature (e.g. in Ch. 6 with Didier Fassin on lead poisoning).

For the English-speaking audience, which has till now often relied on references to Foucault and Latour, the book might well be a way to grasp the reception of Foucauldian studies by French-speaking historians, in the footsteps of Jacques Léonard. Arguably the first historian of medicine in France and the author of one of the best comment on Foucault's *oeuvre*,⁵ Léonard has directly and indirectly influenced various historians such as Olivier Faure or Alain Corbin (who have developed their different take on his legacy from the history of the medical power to the history of the body and of emotion). Monnais shows herself a worthy successor to these historians in her study of *la médecine entre les savoirs et les pouvoirs*, in reference to Léonard's work.⁶ This book was long time coming according to the author's admission in the introduction but it is well worth the wait.

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Josef Rösch, *An Interventional Radiology Odyssey: The Story of My Life and Work* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2016), pp. 101, €72.79, hardback and e-book, ISBN: 9783319338187.

Professional historians today may find the biography something of a strange beast. One of the oldest forms of historical narrative, it details an individual's life and work, typically from birth to death. But as a genre, biography's standing declined in the twentieth-century world of Anglo-American academic history, attracting criticisms of being too narrowly focused and too subjectively inclined.¹ The autobiography or memoir suffered similar critique. One the one hand, autobiography gives its authors the agency to tell their own stories and to be a protagonist in their own time, thereby rescuing themselves from, as E.P. Thompson famously described, 'the enormous condescension of posterity'.² Yet, though autobiography enables more intimate narratives from diverse subjects, it too has an ambivalent relationship with the academe.³

Outside academia, however, both biography and autobiography continue to be relatively accessible and popular genres of historical writing. They provide ample opportunity to weave a compelling narrative out of an individual's life and career in any field. Thus,

⁵ Jacques Léonard, 'L'Historien et le philosophe: À propos de *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison*', *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, 288 (1977), 161–81.

⁶ Jacques Léonard, *La Médecine entre les savoirs et les pouvoirs* (Paris: Aubier, 1981).

¹ See for example Lois Banner's essay in the American Historical Review's roundtable on historians and biography. 'AHR Roundtable: Historians and Biography', *The American Historical Review*, 114, 3 (2009), 580. Available online at <http://ahr.oxfordjournals.org/content/114/3/579.full.pdf+html> (accessed 12 December 2016).

² E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), 12.

³ 'In This Issue', *The American Historical Review*, 114, 3 (2009), xiv–xv. Available online at <https://ahr.oxfordjournals.org/content/114/3/xiii.full.pdf+html> (accessed 12 December 2016).

Springer's Biographies series (which includes both biographies and autobiographies) has the self-professed aim to

tell of the life and work of scholars, innovators and pioneers. . . [both prominent and] lesser known personalities whose significant contributions deserve greater recognition and whose remarkable life stories will stir and motivate readers. . . in [a] manner accessible to non-specialists, interweaving these with salient aspects of the protagonists' personal lives.⁴

Josef Rösch's story of his life and work is a detailed record of his career as an interventional radiologist. His memoir meticulously describes the milestones in his progress from a young radiologist in Prague who accepted a year-long fellowship to the United States, eventually migrating there. The narrative extends in chronological orientation across eleven chapters. It starts with a brief account of Rösch's life in the former Czechoslovakia and goes on to document his major activities in both professional and private life in the United States, where in 1990 he became the first director of a major research institute for interventional radiology (IR), the Dotter Interventional Institute. Rösch belongs to the pioneer generation of IR, who created numerous procedures, techniques and tools to advance the field. IR specialists will be interested to read about the numerous obstacles that interventional radiology faced in its early days, as well as the development of Rösch's own career in conjunction with his American mentor, Charles Dotter. Without question, IR specialists and historically inclined medical practitioners stand to gain much from Rösch's careful accounting of his career.

However, this reviewer is neither an IR specialist nor a medical practitioner. It is unfortunate that most non-specialists are not likely to find Rösch's memoir accessible. It communicates neither the full impact of Rösch's contributions to IR, nor IR's contributions to the domains of surgery and radiology. This stems from the book's lack of explanation on what actually constitutes IR as a field of medical practice and why it is significant. In fairness, it is possible to glean that IR holds crucial importance as a minimally invasive set of techniques and procedures that can diagnose and treat a wide range of disorders across organ systems. However, even arriving at that conclusion is complicated by a mass of jargon, diagrams and details legible only to specialists. Such information is never unpacked for the general reader. On page 18, for instance, Rösch writes that 'Charles [Dotter] performed the first percutaneous transluminal angioplasty. The lesion he dilated was a superficial femoral artery stenosis. He dilated it with coaxial catheters.' There is no further elaboration on these observations.

As earlier noted, the self-professed mission of the Springer Biographies' series is to animate the lives of notable scholars, professionals and scientists for non-specialist readers. It is thus regrettable that Springer did not make greater editorial interventions to contextualise Rösch's account. This could have been accomplished by having another IR specialist more comfortable with writing for general audiences append an introductory essay to Rösch's text. Alternately, non-specialist readers would have benefited from an integration of a broader professional history, written by an historian of medicine, which contextualises IR in the trajectory of how radiological practice became integrated with surgical techniques in related fields like angiography.

This reviewer does not critique Rösch himself for the extreme opacity (to non-specialists) of his account. He tells us of the difficulties he faced, as a native speaker of Czech and German, in learning to write in formal English. Moreover, his entire writing

⁴ Springer Biographies, 'About This Series', <http://www.springer.com/series/13617> (accessed 12 December 2016).

career focused on writing scientific papers in unadorned scientific style, which belies his passionate commitment to his field. 'I was not a novelist to add interesting or attractive words, only simple facts' (p. 94). Yet the 'simple facts' of Rösch's life are more complex than he gives them credit for, and could do considerably more to achieve the Springer series' goal, to 'stir and motivate readers'. For he is a remarkable figure. His journey began in the midst of the Second World War and across the Cold War, with numerous scientific exchanges across the Iron Curtain and the Free World. Here and there we get a sense of the turbulent times he lived in, particularly in the chapter titled 'My Youth', and his stark account of his 22-year-old daughter's tragic death in a traffic accident (p. 33). But there remains ample room for future biographers to animate Rösch's life, situated as it is at the crossroads of post-war history and the history of modern medicine.

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Andrew Schonebaum, *Novel Medicine: Healing, Literature, and Popular Knowledge in Early Modern China* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2016), pp. 296, \$50,00, hardcover, ISBN: 9780295995182.

Among the emerging accounts of the social and cultural histories of Chinese medicine or medicine in China, Andrew Schonebaum's *Novel Medicine: Healing, Literature, and Popular Knowledge in Early Modern China* (2016) is an exceptional attempt to bridge history and literature. The book serves as a lens to probe into the lives of Chinese people and the development and function of popular medical knowledge in the late Ming and Qing dynasties. Instead of analysing how classical medical books or prescription anagraphs were produced, learned, and circulated, Schonebaum decided to read and examine popular novels during the period, e.g., *Peony Pavilion*, *Plum in the Golden Vase*, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and *The Story of the Western Wing*. Schonebaum's work is neither a book written to attract readers who are interested in the medical traditions in early modern China nor a positivist corroboration of how useful or feasible medical information was in the lives of commoners in Chinese society. Rather, through the characteristics of the literature and the power of storytelling, Schonebaum offers an innovative perspective on how diseases were understood, what treatments were sought because of common beliefs, and how vernacular medical knowledge was shaped between authors and readers of these novels.

Through *Novel Medicine*, the author delves into the literature beyond the scope of literary history. The novels studied are famous for their form, with each chapter headed by a couplet that provides the gist of its content. They are realistic stories that focus on the customs, conversations and ways of thinking of the people who belong to a social class. Although these narratives traditionally occupied a lower rung on the literary hierarchy, they describe heretical understandings of diseases, responses to ailments and health-seeking pathways, and reflect the social world that shows the values and customs related to how health was governed in the public and private spaces. Schonebaum reads the novels not only to conduct a thorough documentation but to engage in a reflective analysis of how popular medical knowledge is read. Therefore, aside from catching the attention of readers who are curious about the use of herbs, poisons and antidotes, medical food and emotional techniques, the book appeals to the inquisitiveness of a wider readership of social or cultural history by reappraising the role and function of medical knowledge in novels.