

Book Forum

The books for this month are a holiday gift list:
books to broaden the library and the mind,
to provide pleasure and enjoyment,
to give to oneself and others.

LITERATURE

Angela's Ashes: A Memoir, by Frank McCourt. New York, Simon & Schuster, 1996, 364 pp., \$24.00; \$13.00 (paper).

A century has passed since Leo Tolstoy wrote the first line to *Anna Karenina*: "All happy families are alike but an unhappy family is unhappy after its own fashion." Today, the word "dysfunctional" is often used to describe the unhappy family. However, as a clinical descriptor this term is sadly imprecise and trendy. Unlike a true medical diagnosis, it is a conveniently blurry label that sweeps across a broad array of human experience and clinical findings, suggesting an emotionally chaotic family lacking love, attention, and nurturing. At the most pathological extreme, psychiatrists encounter such families wrought in the chaos of addiction, physical and sexual abuse, and premature death. *Angela's Ashes* looks through a child's eyes at a family crippled by alcoholic havoc. In the second paragraph, the author recalls, "When I look back on my childhood I wonder how I survived at all. It was, of course, a miserable childhood: the happy childhood is hardly worth your while." An unnerving beginning, don't you think?

Frank McCourt is the oldest son in a family collapsed in poverty, gut-wrenching hunger, squalor, and paternal alcoholism. His was virtually a childhood where nightmares walked in daylight.

The story begins a month after Black Tuesday, the beginning of the Great Depression. The place is Brooklyn, New York. A young Angela Sheehan arrives by ship from Ireland and soon, at a neighborhood party, meets Malachy McCourt. Frank McCourt describes him as having a hangdog look from the 3 months he had just spent in jail. Angela is attracted to the hangdog look, and the reader soon recognizes that life with Malachy McCourt will never be plain vanilla. After what the author calls a "knee-trembler," a child is conceived; there is a walk up the middle aisle, and drunkenness, debt, destitution, and more children follow.

Four years into the marriage, there are five children. Then the youngest dies. The cause seems multifactorial: infectious disease, malnutrition, parental ignorance, and neglect. Angela's relatives know she is married to a man beyond control and recommend the family return to their native land. The immigrant dream has failed. Money is sent from Ireland for the family to return.

What follows is a chronicle of a family barely holding on to a rim of survival in Limerick, Ireland, from roughly 1934 to 1948. Malachy McCourt seems never to hold a job more

than 3 weeks. His alcoholism, even by the tolerant norms of early twentieth-century Irish society, is "beyond the beyonds." Addictive irresponsibility creates unpredictable havoc for his family. Destitution and the deaths of two more children result. At age 10, the author is hospitalized with typhoid for more than 3 months in the Fever Hospital at the City Home. While hospitalized, the young Frank McCourt meets 14-year-old Patricia Madigan, who is dying of diphtheria, and is introduced to poetry and Shakespeare. He tells Patricia that Shakespeare's words are like having jewels in your mouth. It seems the author never forgets the cadence and prose of eloquent language. Some of this book's most touching incidents occur outside the family setting, when the author is hospitalized, at school, or during moments of early love.

Pride and whiskey are a bad blend, and Malachy McCourt had too much of both. He was a selfish, shameless alcoholic who, when either righteously sober or pub-crawling-gutter-gliding drunk, intimidated his wife and children, demanding "dignity and respect." Habitually, after drinking the paycheck or charity dole, he would return home to a hungry family with the kiss of whiskey on his lips, singing melancholic Irish ballads and awakening the children to have them swear they'll "die for Ireland." He was an idler who chased the love of whiskey and sang of the sufferings of Ireland without ever incorporating the connections. A mindfulness to the Gaelic proverb: *Is milis dá ól é ach is searbl dá íoc e* (It is sweet to drink but bitter to pay for) would have served his family better.

What unfolds, in an appallingly predictable way, are the effects of Malachy's severe alcoholism underpinned by iron-clad character pathology. His world is painted in black and white with clear, egosyntonic, categorical absolutes. His hatred for the English, his perceived ancient foe, reaches back 800 years. He possesses a fondness for delivering final judgments. Malachy's pontifications are forever bold, but his deeds are wanting. When he speaks, his words often reek with the garlic we label axis II. (It appears that only when sober and with his children is he capable of transcending himself. He becomes the genuine Irish storyteller and spinner of tales that would make Scheherazade wink.)

Young Frank McCourt likens his father to the Holy Trinity—a man with three identities: the one who quietly reads the newspaper in the morning, the one who tells the stories at night, and the bad one with the smell of whiskey. Freud had awareness of the likes of Malachy McCourt when he commented that the Irish were the only people who could not be helped by psychoanalysis (1).

The author is a writing teacher at Stuyvesant High School

in New York City. *Angela's Ashes* is his first book; it earned him the Pulitzer Prize. At the time of this writing, the book has stood solidly on the *New York Times Book Review* best-seller list for a year. It is more than a memoir of alcoholic devastation in a family; it also provides, in astonishing detail, an accurate portrayal of the lives of the poor in the Ireland of the 1930s and 1940s. This is an Irish story without blarney or impish shenanigans. The author deftly ties together everyday family life and neighborhood happenings. His attention to detail is impeccable, and his language forges strong images.

The narrative uniqueness of *Angela's Ashes* is the point of view. It is a continuous, present-tense tale told from the viewpoint of a small child growing to young adulthood. Emotionally seared memories are retold in the echoing voice of a child who stood invisibly, watching attentively—much like a psychiatrist. The tone is conversational, and the language is forthright, unvarnished, and captivating. This is a memoir that reads like a well-crafted novel.

Angela's Ashes is also available on audiocassette. The audio version is slightly abridged without omitting important incidents. The cassettes are ideal for psychiatrists wishing to listen while commuting, and they provide a slightly lesser alternative for those with little time who want to experience the essence of the book. The cassettes offer the advantage of hearing the author narrate his own story in a buoyant Irish lilt.

REFERENCE

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Virginia Woolf, by Hermione Lee. New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1997 (originally published in London by Chatto & Windus in 1996), 892 pp., \$39.95.

Bloomsbury was, and is, both a square and a neighborhood in London. After Virginia Stephen, later Woolf, settled in the area with her siblings, it became the center of an artistic, literary, and intellectual circle that changed London's aesthetic focus and helped usher in a modern imagination. It is too much famed for its freedom and bohemianism and too little for its achievements. It has also become the source of a small publishing industry, initially through the Hogarth Press, which helped introduce Freud and T.S. Eliot to the English-speaking world. However, the "Bloomsbury group" also wrote about themselves (e.g., Leonard Woolf's five-volume memoir [1-5]) and each other; their children wrote about them (e.g., Angelica Garnett's *Deceived With Kindness* [6]); and many others have tried to explicate their lives and their influence and impact on the surrounding and continuing culture.

Virginia Woolf herself, whose works and life are central to our thinking about Bloomsbury, reminds us of the fictions of biography: "Biographers pretend they know people." She also reminds us that "a biography is considered complete if it merely accounts for six or seven selves, whereas a person may well have as many thousand." (This resonates with Freud's warning to Arnold Zweig: "Whoever undertakes to write a biography binds himself to lying, to concealment, to hypocrisy, to flummery and even to hiding his own lack of under-

standing . . . Truth is not accessible" [7].) Nonetheless, Hermione Lee's biography of Woolf is likely to remain the overall "last word" on her life, if not on all of her inner life or on her work, for our time. It benefits powerfully from its precursors: Quentin Bell's portrait of his aunt (8), her circle's memoirs, her now published or available diaries and letters, and the passage of time.

Throughout her life, Virginia Woolf suffered periodic episodes of "madness." There seems to be little doubt that her DSM diagnosis today would be bipolar disorder with psychotic features: there was a family loading for affective illness and suicide and for "fits of the horrors." She suffered from repeated depressions with suicidal ideation ("Yes, I will come to the suicide dream one of these days") and experienced episodes of hypomania ("Virginia in high spirits, fantastical" and "Virginia extremely gay and garrulous") and mania ("She easily became over excited"). Both she and her husband lived in fear of the return of her madness, and Leonard Woolf carefully regulated her life in an attempt to follow her doctors' orders and in the hope of reducing the likelihood of a recurrence. Virginia Woolf stands as an exemplar of Andreasen's and Jamison's hypothesized link between creativity and manic-depressive illness, particularly in writers (9, 10). As Stephen Spender expressed it (p. 763), she had the "acute nervous tension in her own mind between a too great sensitivity which tended to disintegrate into unco-ordinated impressions, and a noble and sane determination not to lose hold of the central thread."

This still leaves us the problem of understanding the meaning(s) in her life, her distinctly adaptive use of her difficulties, and her continuing productivity. There have been many journal articles and several books on her supposed psychology. Many of these contributions have emphasized the presumed forced incestuous relationship with her half-brother, George Duckworth. However, the extent of this relationship is ambiguous, and Lee presents us with a properly cautious and balanced exposition of Duckworth's imposition of his will upon her, certainly socially, and perhaps sexually. Probably more important were the early deaths of her mother, half-sister, and, soon after, her father and brother. This led her to "examine feelings with the intense microscope that sorrow lends." Whatever the etiology of her difficulties and her problems with her "nervous system," Woolf wrote to exorcise her ghosts: "[Father's] life would have entirely ended mine . . . but writing *The Lighthouse* laid [him] in my mind. And now he comes back sometimes, but differently (Writing of them was a necessary act) . . . I suppose that I did for myself what psychoanalysts do for their patients. I expressed some very long felt and deeply felt emotion. And in expressing it I explained it and then laid it to rest." The similarity of her act of writing to an analysis is supported by the freedom of her associations, at times approaching free associations. "Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; but a luminous halo, a semitransparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end . . . Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness."

A good biography should be based on all the available primary data and provide enough of it to be convincing. The best biography will encourage our own examination of the original sources: if it is the life of a writer we should want to read or

to reread what they wrote; if it is a musician we should wish to listen to their music. Lee's liberal use of direct quotation from Woolf's diaries, letters, and public writing leads us directly into her world in a way that entices us to desire a continuing relationship. We can maintain the "friendship" by going back to Woolf's books, as I did while pleurably working my way through Lee's biography. In her essay on Robinson Crusoe (11), Virginia Woolf reminds us that the usefulness of the biography of a writer is to help us understand how writers order their world, to master their perspective. "For the book itself remains."

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The Two Cultures, by C.P. Snow. New York, Cambridge University Press, 1993, 150 pp., \$10.95 (paper).

C.P. Snow was born in 1905 and died in 1980. He was a gracious man and had many friends. Yet, with a couple of exceptions, his 30 books are out of print.

Snow's family was poor. He found various jobs in the Midlands of England in order to go to school. He then took the examination for Cambridge and passed with honors. He did very well at Cambridge, and by the age of 25 he was a fellow in Christ College. (Later he became president of Cambridge University.) He got his Ph.D. under Rutherford in the Cavendish Laboratory—the most famous physics laboratory in the world—and then worked for Rutherford as a physicist.

During World War II Snow was responsible for the recruitment of scientists in England to work on the war effort. He also had some role in the development of the British atomic bomb. After the war, he worked as a director of a national electrical company. He was knighted in his 50s and made a baron (and member of the House of Lords) some years later.

All this time he had been writing. His first novel, a success, appeared in the mid 1920s. Continuing to write novels, he decided in 1935 to write a series of novels roughly based on his own life. With such an interesting life the decision might

have seemed inevitable, but, with the exception of Balzac, none of the prolific writers of our times have written 12 books about a single person and his acquaintances. Snow changed the characters sufficiently to avoid libel. His books became very popular in most countries, including the United States. When he finished the 12 books he received wide recognition for having accomplished a literary feat of rare quality. Many scholars and academics had high regard for his writing, and it was suggested that he be a candidate for the Nobel Prize. He had a wonderfully smooth writing style that was quiet but never dull. Snow had led the life that he described. If he had never written a word he would still have been well-known.

In 1959, Snow was asked to give a lecture at Cambridge. He called the lecture "The Two Cultures." His message was that literary people ignore scientists and scientists ignore literary people. Rare was the physicist who had read *War and Peace*, and even more rare was the English teacher who knew the laws of thermodynamics. Snow made a case for increasing communication between the two groups, and it led to debates on campuses in Western countries. The work was praised—and vilified.

No matter: Snow was wrong. It became clear as time passed that there are not two cultures but a trillion. Not only could organic chemists fail to understand biochemists, and nuclear physicists fail to understand black holes, but each of these specialties in science and literature was transformed into tiny fiefdoms with hardly any cross-communication. *The Two Cultures* did not survive long, although it is one of two books by Snow that are still in print.

Snow was a tall, awkward, homely man who was amiable, gregarious, and liked by almost everyone. It is interesting to compare Snow with F. Scott Fitzgerald. When Fitzgerald died in 1940, all of his books were out of print. Then biographers went to work, and, within a few years, Fitzgerald became a celebrity. His books are widely popular with the younger set. A Snow revival would be welcome. He is a better writer than Fitzgerald (forget *Gatsby*), but he lacked the flaw of drinking immoderately. Only in creative writing has sobriety been considered a flaw, but for many writers the reputation for heavy boozing was certainly a help.

Snow's personal philosophy was tragic, but his social philosophy was optimistic: "There is no reason, just because the individual condition is tragic, so must the social condition be. Each of us is solitary: each of us dies alone; all right, that's fate against which we can't struggle—but there is plenty in our condition which is not fate and against which we are less human unless we do struggle . . . Most of our fellow human beings, for example, are underfed and die before their time."

Charles Percy Snow, Baron Snow of the City of Leicester, was gifted in literature (he may be the finest writer in English of the twentieth century), in science, and in administration. It is a sad world that forgets its great men so quickly.

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Stones From the River, by Ursula Hegi. New York, Simon & Schuster, 1994, \$26.00; \$13.00 (paper).

Ursula Hegi has written an epic novel that spans the years 1915 to 1952 in a small German village. As one would expect from an epic saga, we meet a host of characters and follow them through the course of their lives, which, of course, coin-

cide with the darkest era of German history. Their stories are seen through the eyes of Trudi Montag. The reader first meets this unlikely protagonist while she is praying to God as a small child. Her prayers are single-minded—she wants God to make her grow. She learns from eavesdropping on the gossip of the villagers that her mother had covered her face in horror upon seeing Trudi for the first time. When God does not answer her prayers, Trudi seeks out the village doctor for a pill to make her grow. The doctor informs her, kindly but candidly, that she will never grow because she is, in fact, a dwarf—or a *zwerg*, as everyone refers to her in her native German.

This diagnosis launches Trudi on an inner journey in which she explores what it means to be fundamentally different from everyone else. Hegi has a gift for inhabiting the interior nether regions of a fictional human being and taking the reader along with her so one has the impression of listening to Trudi's most private thoughts. She is tormented by questions of causality. Why are her limbs so short? Her trunk so broad? Why did her mother have to go away to a mental institution so often? Why did her mother have to die before Trudi even started school? Unfortunately, her mother once offered her an answer to the last question: "People die if you don't love them enough."

In the wake of her traumatic childhood, Trudi finds salvation in her father, not only by virtue of his loving and nurturant nature but also because of his profession. He runs the pay library in the village, where the residents of the town come to seek his advice about the latest literary contributions and surreptitiously about their own lives and their own stories.

As Trudi reaches maturity, she works side by side with her father in the library and gradually learns the power of secrets and the narratives behind them. She develops a knack for coaxing customers' secrets out of them by engaging them with interest and compassion. She listens to everyone with a non-judgmental concern. She recognizes that she can never have the acceptance of the denizens of her little village, but she can have their stories.

Stones From the River is about loss, courage, and survival, but, above all, it is about difference. As the horrors of Hitler become apparent to everyone in her village, Trudi joins the resistance and begins hiding Jewish refugees in the basement of her home. Hegi has laid the groundwork early in her novel for what is to come. Trudi's physical differences have led her to be treated with pity, ridicule, and contempt. Thus Trudi is thoroughly familiar with the arbitrary manner in which differences are regarded. The Nazis identified a large group of people as different and determined that they had no right to live. What Freud termed the narcissism of minor differences led to the most ghastly instances of man's inhumanity to man.

In the arms of her lover, Max, however, Trudi learns that her not being like everyone else is enormously appealing to Max. Ultimately, Trudi recognizes that being different is a secret that all human beings share. Each is shaped by a unique narrative or story that is like no other.

Much like a psychotherapist, Trudi has an identity shaped not only by her own narrative but by the narratives of those who have entrusted their stories to her. After the war, she watches in stunned disbelief as the villagers deny their involvement with the Nazis, revising their own life stories and sealing over their sins with denial just as a river rises to cover up the stones in its path. But Trudi's uniqueness lies in her knowledge: "She thought of how—even when the river ran high—she knew where the large stones lay and where the jetties ended because she had looked at the river for countless hours,

just as she had looked at her community and knew its deepest currents" (p. 450). Hegi has created a gripping vision of a distant time and place that will speak to each reader in a remarkably intimate way.

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Poetic Madness and the Romantic Imagination, by Frederick Burwick. University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996, 275 pp., \$49.50.

This is a book that holds your attention, but it is not a book to be read rapidly, primarily because of its abstruse subject matter. It deals with not only "madness" and creativity but also the mysteries of religion, miracles, and divine inspiration.

The contents of the book include an introduction entitled "Creativity and Madness." The author states his theme in the first paragraph: "The agony of the mind striving against the dark night of insanity has been told again and again in the biographies of poets, painters, and philosophers." He then goes on to whet our appetite by summarizing what he will attempt to do in the pages that follow: "Artistic creativity and aesthetic experience ought to involve some activity of the 'higher faculties' not comprehended by conscious analytical reason. 'Original genius,' as advocated by Young and Duff, by Herder and Goethe, was the mental faculty needed to reach beyond the constraints of reason and tradition to elevate the human consciousness to new heights." There is a good deal of information in the introduction—far too much to even summarize here. I was interested to note, however, that the author discusses the research between 1974 and 1988 of the Editor of the *Journal*, Nancy C. Andreasen, M.D., Ph.D., on creativity and mental illness.

Following the introduction, the author divides the book into three parts: Poetics of Madness, Narratives of Madness, and Mad Poets. There are three chapters in each part.

I found most of the book fascinating, but perhaps its flavor can best be presented by a few quotes. In the first chapter, the author says, "Whether divine or natural, ordered or erratic, the very presumption of genius functioned to liberate the artistic endeavor. Genius, which conforms to the natural order of things, may effectively ignore traditional models, but it does not necessarily defy reason. Genius, which serves as an oracle of the supernatural, or even of the mystical power of human creativity, must presumably communicate in terms other than those dictated by rational experience."

The second chapter presents a great deal of information related to religious thinking during different eras and as seen by a variety of writers. De Quincey is quoted frequently; for example: "On such a final creation resulting from such a distraction of parts it is indispensable to suppose an overruling inspiration, in order at all to account for the final result of a most elaborate harmony."

And so on. There are whole paragraphs that could be quoted on almost every page, but, of course, this would make for an impossibly long review. Perhaps it is best to allow the author to sum up using selected quotes from the last two paragraphs of the book: "The dilemma of the mad rhapsodist results, in part, from the irrational wellings that accompany the creative process, whether or not the artist endeavors to reassert rational order . . . While the poetry of irrationality may baffle literary critic and psychologist alike, it nevertheless ex-

ercises a powerful appeal precisely because the 'unknown' is hauntingly familiar. The mad rhapsodist exposes a dark side of the mind that is as intimate as the shadows of our own repressed consciousness."

To me, this is a highly readable, scholarly, and relevant book, of interest to many mental health professionals and others, but particularly to those who have been, or will be, delving in one way or another into the intriguing but challenging area of creativity and "madness."

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HISTORY

Rebels: The Irish Rising of 1916, by Peter De Rosa. New York, Doubleday, 1990, 560 pp., \$25.00; \$14.00 (paperback published in 1992 by Fawcett [Ballantine Books]).

An excellent historical work for the lay reader can take distant events and make them as lively as a novel and as immediate as word-of-mouth report. In the nonfiction *Rebels*, Peter De Rosa brings Ireland's failed Easter Rising of 1916 to life, much as Michael Shaara's historical novel *The Killer Angels* (1) does for Gettysburg. He writes in a conversational, easy-to-follow style and tells the compelling, still-controversial story in an even-handed manner. What is the attraction? A dramatic tale, even when one knows how it comes out. A cast of unusual characters. A contribution to what sense can be made of the dismal situation persisting to this day in the six counties of Northern Ireland. And, finally, some understanding of what may cause apparently healthy people to embrace their deaths.

De Rosa does an effective job of filling in background information and presenting the historical events as they unfolded. The Easter Rising was the last of innumerable failed rebellions by the Irish during 700 years of English domination. Hoping that England would be distracted and weakened by its massive effort to defeat Germany in World War I, little more than a thousand rebels (initially armed and trained against the threat of attack by militant Ulster Protestants bitterly opposed to inclusion in an independent Ireland) seized key points in Dublin on Easter Monday 1916 and proclaimed a republic. The rest of the country did not rise to join them, and the rebellion rapidly became a symbolic gesture, a blood sacrifice. After 6 days, the leaders, more poets and idealists than military men, were forced to surrender. At that time, the vast majority of Irish people, who had reasonable hope of eventual Home Rule under Britain, who had relatives and friends among the numerous Irish troops fighting in the British Army, and who hated seeing Dublin devastated by battle, mocked and despised the rebels. However, in a crucial blunder, which De Rosa makes understandable, British authorities chose to make an example of the rebels, summarily court-martialing and executing 16 presumed leaders and treating other prisoners harshly. The horror felt by the general public, the bravery of those who were shot, and the recollection of past heavy-handed crackdowns led to a complete, rapid reversal of public opinion. The Irish would no longer accept English control and, within 5 years, had fought to negotiate a treaty whereby English forces would leave the 26 southern counties of Ireland. Although a 3-year civil war in the South and the continuing struggle in Northern Ireland followed, the defeated and executed rebels had, in fact, been victorious.

What makes *Rebels* worth reading is the way in which these characters of 80 years ago are brought to life. Patrick Pearse, the schoolteacher and poet who had always dreamed of dying for Ireland, James Connolly, the tough Socialist organizer who, dying of gangrene from his wounds, had to be tied to a chair to be shot; John MacBride, a former romantic rival whom W.B. Yeats had described as a "drunken, vainglorious lout," and the scholars Eamon De Valera (who survived to become Ireland's President only because he had been born in New York), and Thomas MacDonagh stand out among the rebels. General Maxwell, the British commander who put down the rebellion and ordered the executions, comes across as a rigid but thoroughly professional soldier who believed that he had to carry through his actions, even as he became aware of their futility. Acts of chivalry and respect between opposing sides amid atrocities and slaughter make the reader almost nostalgic for such bygone conflicts. For example, General Blackadder, president of the court martial, reported that the condemned were "fine chaps, but no doubt about their guilt. He had wanted to shake their hands, especially Pearse. He had made a damn fine speech before the court."

Where *Rebels* truly reaches the reader emotionally is in its last 96 pages, where the court-martials and executions, occurring 1-3 weeks after the end of the rising, are vividly recreated. The rebels' last patriotic statements, their willingness to die, and the respect apparently felt by the British soldiers detailed to the firing squads are recorded. The condemned men's last visits with family members and their farewell notes to their children, many of whom were very young, can truly bring a reader to tears. In many instances, their deep religious faith added to their patriotic fervor and made them cheerful and free from bitterness at the end.

Nowadays, with war sensibly out of fashion (we hope) and the excesses of nationalism amply discredited, we often forget that some may choose sacrifice or that societies do rally around heroes, especially martyrs. Ireland has been blessed, or cursed, with an ample supply of the latter, but many of us also have the occasion to explore such phenomena. We may shake our heads at tragic wastes of life, attempt to understand altruism, and discuss our many ways of confronting mortality, but *Rebels* may make us conclude, with Yeats (2):

MacDonagh and MacBride
And Connolly and Pearse
Now and in time to be,
Wherever green is worn,
Are changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

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The House of Percy: Honor, Melancholy, and Imagination in a Southern Family, by Bertram Wyatt-Brown. New York, Oxford University Press, 1994, 454 pp., \$30.00; \$17.95 (paper).

The family is our most enduring institution. Anthropologist Ralph Linton observed that in whatever natural or manmade holocaust will be attendant to mankind's Omega Point, the

last person will spend his last hour searching for his family. A major task within any family is to impart across the generations a sense of itself, its heritage if you will, to individual members. Bertram Wyatt-Brown, Professor of History at the University of Florida, originally intended to focus on two prominent Percys, William Alexander (Will) and Walker, but his explorations soon led him to become "thoroughly engaged in the family" and expand his research into the present book. Will, the bachelor lawyer-poet-author uncle who raised Walker and his two brothers following the accidental death of their mother (who had been widowed by their father's suicide), actively transmitted the family ethos to the boys. Walker, physician and influential, prize-winning Southern novelist, portrayed family members in, and mined his family's history for, many of his stories and novels.

Wyatt-Brown brings a professional historian's tools to the task: first-person interviews, primary sources, access to public and family archives, and analysis of his subjects' published work. In Wyatt-Brown's capable hands there emerges a historiography vividly communicating his fascination as he portrays each generation's prominent citizens and professionals; men and women of intellect, letters, and leadership. In the two centuries of its American lineage, the Percy family has laudably maintained a profound complexity, abiding values, and consistent achievement but has been dogged by a legacy of major psychiatric illness. The family's biographer plausibly substantiates his contention that a strong sense of family tradition, and the affective illness that afflicted so many of them, exerted inexorable influence on the lives, careers, and writings of generations of Percys. Though there is depth in every chapter, it is to Will and Walker Percy's lives and works that Wyatt-Brown appropriately applies his most thorough and extensive analysis, and which I believe will be of most interest to the readership. While the biographer does not attempt to rank either among the pantheon of Southern authors, his analyses of the works of Will and Walker are scholarly and may well stimulate the unfamiliar reader to examine these titles.

The family's narrative begins with the enigmatic Charles, "its founder in the American Southwest, born in 1740 in some part of the British Isles, most probably southern Ireland" to "symbolize the ambiguity of Southern white origins," where a noble lineage is often claimed to belie "their plain-folks origins." Though Charles's early history and the path of his journey to the American South are vague, it is clear that he set the tone and pace for his successors. He established thriving businesses along the way from his first landing in the Caribbean to, ultimately, a large, successful plantation and several businesses in the Mississippi Delta. His properties and wealth were built on extensive use of slaves, his own first-rate political and business acumen, and taking advantage of the British Crown's encouragement to populate the new territories as a buffer against the Spanish. Charles Percy sought out and befriended others of like intellectual interests and maintained within his home a better-than-average library. However, his success and prosperity were interrupted by a deepening depression and paranoia, which disrupted many of his important relationships and culminated in his suicide by drowning. In subsequent chapters, Wyatt-Brown confirms that Charles Percy's life and illness adumbrated that of many of his descendants, including Will and Walker.

Through a prologue and 18 chapters, Wyatt-Brown weaves a genealogy and psychography of successive generations of Percys and the effect on their private lives and published literature of the ever-present family credo and illness. He sensibly includes for each generation the geographic, sociologic,

and to some extent the psychologic peculiarities of their time. He adds sketches of contemporaries, warming and deepening his portraiture by populating each chapter with a gallery of the family's Northern and Southern friends, acquaintances, business partners, politicians, and physicians. Each generation is marked by prominence in some of its members as writers, politicians, or civic leaders and by manifest psychiatric illness, hospitalization (sometime multiple), and, tragically, suicide. Prominence and achievement were not limited to the Percy men, however. Several of the women were published authors and leaders in their own right, and in two chapters (5 and 6), their talents and contributions are given particular attention. Though it cannot be ignored or camouflaged that several members of the family were slave-owners, others, notably lawyer and Senator LeRoy Percy, included in their civic leadership a forceful opposition to the Klan and postslavery exclusion and oppression of blacks. In chapter 12 ("The Terrors of Klan and Flood"), Leroy Percy's life and courageous career in the Mississippi Delta are well documented. Because the family's affluence afforded therapy in the best Eastern facilities, members were brought into contact with a variety of professionals in other states, and, over several generations, friendships were formed with notable psychiatrists and physicians. Harry Stack Sullivan befriended Will Percy, and interesting personal vignettes are included from his several visits to Will's Greenville, Mississippi, home. Robert Coles became close friends with Walker Percy and visited during junkets to the South researching his own landmark publications.

The physical features of the volume are attractive and of high quality, though the small print imparts an oppressive crowding to the pages. There are four sections of photographs to support the narrative, though a generational repetition of given names and absence of a chronological sequencing caused me some confusion. The addenda authenticate a prodigious research for this book: 2½ pages listing selected manuscript collections and 75 pages of chapter "Notes." An 11-page index and 3 pages of genealogy round out the section.

The Percys' story is a compelling retrospection of the life and times, the successes and travails of a Southern family of means and how members come to terms with their social position, credo, money, each other, and, above all, their affective illness. It is told in substance and a style that will delight and inform the reader.

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A History of Clinical Psychiatry: The Origin and History of Psychiatric Diseases, edited by German Berrios and Roy Porter. New York, New York University Press, 1995, 480 pp., \$65.00.

I love history. During my sabbatical in Germany in the 1970s, I engaged in some historical research on the history of medicine at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, working closely with the professor of medical history. I learned great respect for historians, the depth of their scholarship, and the meticulous nature of their methodology. I also learned that I was *not* a historian. However, I am a dabbler in medical history, and I find many parallels between our work as clinicians—the careful methods we employ when we attempt to create a history of a patient's illness from the memory fragments and reports of families and friends—and the tasks of the historian of science. At first, I found this brilliant and scholarly book by German Berrios and Roy Porter difficult to

read, but then I consulted my colleague in the history department, who gave me some orienting background to the book and its authors.

I learned that Berrios is a psychiatrist as well as a historian, with an impressive and exhaustive command of European and American sources. Because of his medical background, he views psychiatric illnesses as having a neurobiological basis. As a historian, however, he recognizes that nosology is a social construct. In the introduction, Berrios and Porter write, "The history of clinical psychiatry may be defined as the study of the way in which clinical signals and their descriptions have interacted in successive historical periods, and of the psychosocial context. To estimate the extent to which earlier meanings (terms, concepts, and behaviors) are preserved when clinical categories are transferred from one discourse to the next, historian and clinician need to know how descriptive and nosographic rules are formulated." They ask if the meaning of symptoms in the nineteenth century has anything in common with the meaning of symptoms in the eighteenth. Does "mania," or "melancholia," or "hypochondriasis" mean today what it did in 1800?

Roy Porter is also a very well-known and respected professor in the social history of medicine. He is currently working on the history of hysteria at the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine. He brings to the book a broad social perspective and an awareness of the conflict between the two views of history: "Two metaphors seem to control the understanding of historical nosology. One pictures the clinician as cataloging species (diseases) in a garden; the other envisages the clinician as a sculptor carving shapes out of formless matter, i.e., creating 'clinical forms.' The garden approach encourages the search for a 'discoverer' who with his powerful eye overcomes all misleading descriptions. The creationist approach requires that the vision guiding the sculptor be 'contextualized.' The latter activity may range from severe 'social-constructionism' to milder forms of social accounting which leave room *for notions such as scientific progress*" (italics mine).

It is not only in historical circles that this debate is taking place. Sharon Begley (1) outlined the elements of the conflict: "The critics of science say that the practice of science—the questions it asks, the way it interprets observations, even what counts as data—is subject to the political, cultural and social influences of the times. Science is a social construct."

Perhaps the authors should be forgiven for taking a shot at DSM-IV. They write, "Current clinical researchers, on the other hand, find their object of inquiry determined by 'operational' definitions (DSM-IV, for example). Those very definitions would land the historian in hopeless anachronism. This does not mean, of course, the DSM-IV definition of schizophrenia cannot be made, itself, the object of historical inquiry. It can (and, incidentally, it should) but the resulting tale will have little to do with the history of dementia praecox (as defined by Kraepelin or Morel) or with that of intellectual insanity (as defined by Esquirol). It will have, however, much to do with the social factors that led a group of psychiatrists in the North East of the USA to arrive at this definition of the disease."

One of my informal guides in recommending a book is how often while I am reading (usually in the evening) I share some interesting or amusing bit of writing or information by reading it out loud to my wife, who with uncomplaining patience puts aside her work to listen. One of my favorite quotes from the book is the poem by Jonathan Swift entitled "On the Death of Dr. Swift." In describing the symptoms of dementia, Porter quotes the following:

Tho' it is hardly understood
Which way my death can do them good,
Yet thus, methinks, I hear 'em speak:
"See how the Dean begins to break!
You plainly find it in his face.
That old vertigo in his head
Will never leave him till he's dead.
Besides, his memory decays:
He recollects not what he says;
He cannot call his friends to mind:
Forgets the place where last he din'd;
Plyes you with stories o'er and o'er;
He told them fifty times before."

I greatly enjoyed reading this book. It is a synthesis of the clinical and historical. Berrios and Porter have assembled a cast of more than 40 authors who are experts in various fields of clinical practice and history across disciplines. In almost 700 pages they cover the history of major mental disorders from clinical and social-historical perspectives. With few exceptions, each chapter has a "clinical" and a "social" section, prepared by different authors. The book is divided into three sections, Neuropsychiatric Disorders, including stroke, dementia, and Parkinson's disease; Functional Psychoses, such as schizophrenia and depression; and Neuroses, including anxiety and panic disorders, neurasthenia, posttraumatic stress disorder, and obsessive-compulsive disorder. The book is designed to be the standard reference work on the subject for both historians and medical scientists. As usual, I found that the chapters on the disorders with which I am most familiar were the most interesting to me. I loved the sections on conversion disorder and hysteria, somatoform disorders, and neurasthenia and fatigue syndromes. I will refer to them often.

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PSYCHIATRIC TOPICS

Charcot: Constructing Neurology, by Christopher G. Goetz, M.D., Michael Bonduelle, M.D., and Toby Gelfand, Ph.D. New York, Oxford University Press, 1995, 376 pp., \$55.00.

Although the name Charcot is familiar to physicians, the details of his life and work are less well-known. This biography by two neurologists and a historian of medicine, from the United States, France, and Canada, respectively, sheds considerable light on the man who developed neurology as a medical specialty and who was one of Freud's first teachers on hysteria. The authors have divided their work into nine chapters, tracing Charcot's life, times, and career in parallel. The book is well-illustrated with photographs, reproductions of drawings (some by Charcot himself) and paintings, and tables.

Jean-Martin Charcot was born in Paris in 1825 and spent his entire career in the Paris Medical School, where he was awarded the first professorial chair in diseases of the nervous system in 1881. Charcot was of modest origins and had an early interest in art, but he began medical training in 1843. In nineteenth-century Paris, medical education took many years—

10 in Charcot's case, including a 4-year internship and highly competitive examinations. The system of faculty advancement and the equivalent of residency training were also rigidly hierarchical and pyramidal. Charcot's interests began in general medicine, and his career progressed slowly until his return to the Salpêtrière in 1862. The authors' excellent description of this famous hospital for the treatment of chronic disease and psychiatric illness in women illuminates how Charcot seized a strategic opportunity to use its patient population in teaching and research on the nervous system. Charcot's painstaking descriptive work and his relatively new method of anatomoclinical correlation allowed him to expand his knowledge and reputation and establish the Salpêtrière as the leading international center for the developing field of neurology. His early work with spinal disorders such as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, tabes, and multiple sclerosis as well as his interest in Parkinson's disease and cerebral localization are well explored, and the descriptions of the lives of patients with chronic, incurable illnesses and their doctors are of more than passing interest.

Although Charcot's reputation was founded on basic neurology, his work in hysteria (conversion disorders, for the most part) brought him controversy, notoriety, and his most famous student. Following Briquet, Charcot attempted to study "hysterical" convulsions, contractures, sensory symptoms, and other phenomena systematically and so brought such disorders closer to the medical mainstream. His etiologic theories were supplanted by those of Janet and Freud, his search for anatomical correlates proved futile, and he lacked psychological sophistication even by nineteenth-century standards, but Charcot's application of scientific methods to the investigation of a psychiatric illness has proven influential to this day.

The authors continue, recounting Charcot's fame, his leadership in the competition in academic medicine between France and Germany, the challenges mounted to his near-monopoly over French neurology, and his loss of influence as his health failed after 1890. After his death in 1893, the "Salpêtrière School" fell farther, although the perspective of a hundred years is kinder to his reputation than were his immediate successors. Any acquaintance with neurology will bring to mind Charcot's students Babinski, Meige, Marie, Guillian, and Gilles de la Tourette. What some readers may find lacking is more psychobiographical information. Although Charcot's desire for fame, his autocratic traits, his moments of informality with his students, and his embrace of "progressive" thought are chronicled, much less personal information, compared with the wealth of professional material, has been available to the biographers. Charcot's pessimism, shyness, and what the authors refer to as "somber elusiveness" cannot be well explored, so the elements that many savor in biography—the glimpses into the subject's inner life and hypotheses about personality dynamics—are absent. The reader is left with a clear external image of Charcot, much about the physician, teacher, and scientist, his legacy to the medical world, and some vivid portraits of the life led by European physicians and scholars of his era.

Is this enough? *Charcot: Constructing Neurology* certainly held my interest, and it should do so for anyone with curiosity about the sources of our knowledge and practice in an era in which syphilis was a dominant disease, pharmacology was primitive, doctors were nearly always men, and academic advancement was dependent on patronage, self-promotion, and navigating a Byzantine organizational structure (*plus ça*

change . . .). The writing style, despite a few typographical errors and the unevenness inherent in an international effort (three chapters are translated from French), is free enough from academic aridity to keep the reader engaged as Charcot's life unfolds. Although not an essential work for a psychiatrist's library, *Charcot: Constructing Neurology* enriches our understanding of our origins and entertains us with its portrait of Parisian medical life in the last century.

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Writing at the Margin: Discourse Between Anthropology and Medicine, by Arthur Kleinman. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1995, 308 pp., \$40.00.

Specialization in academia, especially in large university systems, encourages the extending of limited theoretical structures beyond their reasonable territories of explanation. These feats test the range of theoretical power and may spur creativity, as when a painter limits the palette to blues. But when the attempt is to conceptualize the fullness of the experience of our patients without one or more legs of the biopsychosocial tripod, this can seem unnecessarily limiting. However interesting, the result teeters in full view of clinical reality. One example is Paul M. Churchland's attempt to do without the psyche and society in explaining by neurophysiological concepts alone "the nature and dynamics of mental illness" (1, p. 74). Arthur Kleinman's effort, for the past 2 decades that he has been active in medical anthropology (and this book includes a 9-page appendix of "works by Arthur Kleinman"), would seem to be focused on doing without the psyche and explaining clinical situations as a shorter circuit from the social setting to the biological state without recourse to a theory of the mind.

The main section of this book, *Suffering as Social Experience*, argues that we lose the moral and teleological significance of, for example, the horrors of oppression of epileptic patients in China, "when suffering is configured as a stress with which we cope (either adaptively or ineffectively) or a disease that can be 'cured'" (p. 115). Included is a study of the social experience of epilepsy in China, a country in which social attitudes toward epileptic patients resemble those in European and American cultures before the modern pharmacological treatments of epilepsy were widely disseminated.

A shorter first part of the book, *The Culture of Biomedicine*, revisits Kleinman's interest in characterizing the failings of the medical profession to take politics into account and of office-based psychiatrists emphasizing individuation. Kleinman here proposes an ethnographic method that would "reshape bioethics' almost single-minded interest in government regulation by emphasizing the dialectical connection between the broad historical processes of change and the local settings in which those changes are exerting an influence on health and illness" (p. 62). With Marion Young (2), Kleinman feels that "the focus of ethics should be to empower groups who are the victims of relationships of dominance" (p. 61).

These sections, although properly chastening of us, are rather dry reading, filled with abstract anthroposocial jargon, and are preceded by an introduction subtitled "Medical Anthropology as Intellectual Career" in which Kleinman withdraws a lot of his terminology from previous books, vows to eschew any theory of universals of the psyche, and reconstrues

depression and somatization as "sociosomatics," skipping lightly over any real intermediation of mind.

More fascinating is Kleinman's third section, *The State of Medical Anthropology*, which comprises a 63-page critical review entitled "The New Wave of Ethnographies in Medical Anthropology." Kleinman says interesting things of the work of his more extreme younger colleagues, some of which the reader might be tempted to say of Kleinman's own work and claims. Of Crandon-Malamud's work about victimization and exploitation and power-seeking in the Bolivian Highlands (3), Kleinman asks, "Don't highland Bolivians ever go to practitioners because they want to feel better or receive medications? Don't they ever go because they are faced with troubling symptoms?" (p. 199). Even though he feels the demonstrated answer is no, he has asked the question. In discussing music as "a ubiquitous component of indigenous healing rituals" (p. 215), he hypothesizes modeling "relationality and reciprocity . . . in terms of rhythms that are actualized in phases of time as synchronized or resonating changes that jump from social networks to neural networks" (p. 215). Neural networks, at least, are very mind-compatible constructions. Roseman's work on musical healing in the Malaysian rain forest (4) "is not rich enough in events, situations, or lives to sustain such an illumination of how intertextuality and polyphony actually transform persons through performance" (p. 222). Of Schepher-Hughes' ethnography (5), Kleinman says, "Calling most physicians and anthropologists exemplars of bad faith because they fail to recognize the secret indignation of the poor . . . is so extreme a claim as to render this part of the ethnography suspect of exaggeration and name-calling" (p. 237). A few pages later we read that Schepher-Hughes "accuses me of writing too narrow a medical and cognitive account of somatization, based on the idea of defense mechanisms" (p. 238) when "the idea of defense mechanisms is not the main point Joan Kleinman and I make" (p. 238).

What will become of medical ethnography and of such epigoni? Kleinman predicts that "the search for social theories of the human misery of violence, poverty and oppression will preoccupy the next generation of ethnographers" (p. 241). Discussing Young's work (6), Kleinman describes posttraumatic stress disorder as part of the "nasty legacy" of the Vietnam War and opines that "DSM-IV widens the criteria so that traumatic memory can encompass the fashionable human problems of the new world disorder" (p. 250). Finally, Kleinman calls for a rapprochement with religion and "soteriology" (p. 246) "as the next step" after Good's "impressive mix of social theory and ethnography" (7, p. 246) in the culture of medicine.

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Kitchen Table Wisdom: Stories That Heal, by Rachel N. Remen, M.D. New York, Riverhead Books (Berkley Putnam Publishing Group), 1996, 336 pp., \$22.95; \$12.50 (paper).

We are all overloaded with work, information, and books, and to be told that there is yet one more book we should read can feel vaguely nauseating. But that overload and the costs it exacts are the subject of *Kitchen Table Wisdom*, as are the ways in which we can remedy these costs.

We enter medicine with high ideals, with hopes for providing healing and comfort for others, establishing a good and satisfying life for ourselves, and making discoveries and breakthroughs to benefit future generations. Yet somewhere along the way these ideals can become submerged under an avalanche of data and demands, ludicrously long work hours and chronic fatigue, the worship of technology and objectivity, and the unacknowledged grief of facing so much suffering and death. Small wonder then, as Rachel Remen makes clear, that all too often our hearts close to protect ourselves from the overwhelming pain we witness, compassion withers around the 24th hour without sleep, we armor ourselves against the welter of powerful emotions in ourselves and others, and become, in large part, highly efficient technicians. In short, we suffer from what the French call *deformation professionnelle*.

We and our patients pay a terrible price for this deformation. Is it inevitable? "No!" says Remen, and she proceeds to demonstrate, through story after story, ways in which we can reclaim the ideals, caring, compassion, and empathy that helped bring us into medicine.

Rachel Remen has made this transition herself and, through the almost 100 personal accounts in her book, shows how that transition occurred and how healing and helpful it was for her and her patients. Story after story tells of the damage done to both physician and patient by the physician's suppression of emotions and warmth. And story after story tells of how patients yearn for their physicians to express or at least be open to these feelings. "My doctors' warmth and care are as important as any treatment they give" is the recurrent theme.

This is a book that can begin to help and heal those who read it. Few physicians will fail to recognize themselves in its portraits. Few will fail to sigh over the suppression of their emotions and humanity. And many will be inspired to risk being more open, more overtly caring and compassionate, and more willing to reclaim their full humanity for the sake of their patients, their families, and themselves.

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The Body of Myth: Mythology, Shamanic Trance, and the Sacred Geography of the Body, by J. Nigro Sansonese. Rochester, Vt., Inner Traditions International, 1994, 347 pp., \$24.95 (paper).

The word "Myth" derives from the Greek *μυθος* and means "a story." Nevertheless, the word is sufficiently beguiling that Plato opined that myth was a healthy exercise in imagination. In his prologue, the author of *The Body of Myth*, J. Nigro Sansonese, a physics and mathematics teacher and a practitio-

ner of raja yoga, very succinctly states that his book is about God and that to know God is to understand myth. Consequently, the secret of myth, a fundamental aspect of the human experience, is to find that the manner of the happy, fulfilled self is not dissimilar from what Joseph Campbell calls "bliss." To achieve Campbell's noncontingent happiness or bliss, Sansonese believes one must understand myth in a practical way "through an esoteric yet universal teaching about the body and about life in the body." To accomplish his goal, Sansonese divides his epic work into a tripartite presentation totaling 28 chapters and three appendixes.

Part 1, Trance, introduces the language of trance with the expressed aim of discerning the language of the body and the meaning of myth. The trance state is seen as both a psychological and physiological link, especially with the shamanic trance, to the foundations of most religions. The language of trance, through the teachings of the Hindu pundit Patañjali and his yoga-sutra, is a set of descriptors for an esoteric practice that unlocks a deep awareness of the human body. Chapter 1, "The Sound of One Hand Clapping," introduces the inner world of proprioception. It responds to the puzzling Zen koan with the awareness that the auditory nerve is not stimulated solely by external vibrations. In other words, the sound of one hand clapping is the sound of our own ear as we pick up microwave background static, also known as blackbody radiation. Yoga is the technique that allows us to tune into our unique inner world. Myths, according to the author, are coded instructions for this esoteric practice and, if interpreted correctly, form the basis for elucidating a systematic description of the human organism.

Part 2, Myth, expands upon this systematic description, discussing everything from "Greco-Roman Esoterism" and "Judeo-Christian Esoterism" to "The Mysteries of Eleusis," "The Siege of Troy," and "Sin and Salvation." One example, from the chapter entitled "Sisyphus and the Stone," illustrates this connection. Sisyphus, king of Corinth, is aware of the philandering ways of Zeus and knows that Zeus's current love, Aegina, is the daughter of Asopus, a Corinthian Isthmus river deity. Asopus, enraged, bribes Sisyphus to tell him where his wayward Aegina is hiding, proffering a failsafe bubbling spring called the Pyrene fountain. Asopus then surprises Zeus, who transforms himself into a boulder and rolls uphill and then rains angry blows on him. Later, Zeus gets his revenge on Sisyphus by assigning him the task of rolling a boulder up a hillside in Hades. Sisyphus can be freed from both Hades and this task only if he can push the boulder to the top of the hill and keep it there. Zeus, who is not noted for his benign attitudes toward irritating mortals, causes the boulder to slip from Sisyphus' grasp and roll back to the bottom whenever Sisyphus reaches the summit. Sisyphus must start the task again for what may be an eternity. The esoteric subject of the myth of Sisyphus and the stone and the answer to the ancient riddle—What rolls uphill, never reaching the top?—is "the breath." Sisyphus, in the author's schema, is an esoteric description of respiration.

Multiple examples of myths with their interpreted relationship to the human body allow the author to synthesize his corpus of esoterica into several axiomatic statements:

Axiom I: A myth is an esoteric description of a heightened proprioception.

Axiom II: The organizing principle of extended myth is recapitulation.

Corollary: The rhetorical technique of archaic myths is pleonastic.

Axiom III: There are three categories of myth: esoteric

descriptions of the first, second, and third worlds during heightened proprioception. [These three worlds are stereognosis, perception, and cognition. Stereognosis, the first world, is the source of visceral proprioception, the proprioceptions of the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems, and all the body below the nostrils associated with taste and touch. Perception, the second world, is chiefly sight, hearing, smell, and all external sensation from the region between the brow and the mouth. Cognition, the third world, is principally thought, intellect, or the "sixth sense," and the head above the brow.]

Axiom IV: The proper nouns of authentic myth are of two kinds: 1) mantras derived from phons and 2) words descriptive of meditation. [A "phon" is a proprioceptive sound. A "mantra" is a word derived onomatopoeically from the phon. There are mantras that correspond to phons representing the three worlds, i.e., a dull roar for the first world, a clicking for the second, and a whine for the third.]

Axiom V: The ethical component of an archaic mythicoreligious system derives from the attempt to control reincarnation. [The author asserts that the struggle to control the birth-death cycle has led to the development of ethical systems, through religious tenets, to regulate it.]

In part 3, Science, the author attempts to complete his goal of "a grand synthesis of science, consciousness, and myth—by means of yoga." To this end, Sansonese introduces the reader to the three ages of man. These ages correspond to the three worlds already defined. Scientific knowledge in the first world—what one feels is what is real—is the Stereognostic Age. It is the age of poetic explanations and Homer. The Age of Perception, between 700 B.C.E. and 1900 C.E., covers at least two millennia of evolving scientific methodology from Thales through Newton to Maxwell. The mechanical universe, with its perceptualism, then gave way to the twentieth century and the Cognitive Age. The physics of the Cognitive Age is quantum mechanics, which is a mathematical description of observer cognition, or, as the author states, "the objectification of cognitive states without their simultaneous perceptualization." He goes on to postulate that all cognitive functions are linguistic functions and that all "the paradoxes of quantum mechanics can be removed by positing some sort of nonlocalizable a priori elementary awareness in any physical system." In other words, it is a metaphysical decision to assume unconsciousness as a basic property of physical reality.

In conclusion, the argument has gone full circle. The author has attempted to elucidate the scientific basis of mythology and the equivalent mythological basis of modern science. The unifying convergence of these two disciplines is found within the human body. It is "the body of myth and a physical body which has evolved in conformity with the laws of nature."

The Body of Myth is not suitable for everyone. It is difficult to read because its content is both polymathic and arcane and because its style is both erudite and abstruse. One cannot nestle up to it before a warm fire and read it from cover to cover over a weekend. It requires persistence, patience, and time to complete the task. The words of Jesus—"Straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14)—likewise apply to any potential reader of this tome. Nevertheless, this book has echoed the notion that the Kingdom of God is within each of us. Finally, I hope that in the future the author will use cyberspace

as the medium for getting his message out. Its nonlinearity and interconnectedness, along with its worldwide access, could prove both heuristic and pedagogic.

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Bonobo: The Forgotten Ape, by Frans De Waal; photographs by Frans Lanting. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997, 210 pp., \$39.95.

There are a few very highly regarded primatologists who can present their research in a form that the layperson can enjoy and appreciate. Frans De Waal, Professor of Psychology at Emory University and Research Professor at the Yerkes Regional Primate Research Center in Atlanta, is probably one of the best of this elite group. He is a world-renowned researcher, and he has written several excellent books derived from his research. His volume *Good Natured: The Origins of Right and Wrong in Humans and Other Animals* (1) was reviewed in the *Journal* last year (2). He now has joined forces with Frans Lanting, an internationally acclaimed wildlife photographer, to bring us an excellent monograph that focuses on the bonobo.

Jane Goodall, another outstanding primatologist-writer, states in her endorsement of this book, "Here at last is a book that will give the fourth great ape the visibility that this wonderful species deserves. You will learn that bonobos are not just 'little chimpanzees' but are every bit as different from chimpanzees as chimpanzees are from gorillas. If you care about the great apes, this book, with its superb photographs and vivid text, is a must" (back of book jacket). I completely agree with Goodall's assessment. To read this book is to derive pleasure as well as to acquire new information about one of our closest living relatives.

For psychiatrists and mental health professionals, *Bonobo* gives us new insights and appreciation of human behavior and its possible evolutionary antecedents and their variations and diversity.

"A Chinese poet many centuries ago noticed that to recreate something in words is like being alive twice" (3). Reviewing a fascinating, very literate, endearing book with superb photographs is like being alive three times—reading and looking at the illustrative photographs, thinking about the many implications of this very first-class presentation, and rereading the words as preparation for writing this review.

De Waal's earlier book (1) mapped the evolution of man as it relates to the higher anthropoids. The hominid line (apes and humans) reflects recent advances in DNA analysis. The chimpanzees, bonobos, and gorillas are much closer to humans than previously thought. We share 98% genetic homology with chimpanzees and bonobos. Most people have never heard of bonobos, despite their closeness to us. Now scientists are beginning to make observations about the socialization and defenses of these heretofore long-lost relatives. De Waal, an expert primatologist, has studied and observed chimpanzees extensively and over time. His studies, as well as those of Jane Goodall, indicate that chimpanzees have male power politics, cooperative hunting, intergroup warfare, and, at times, intragroup killing behavior. Bonobo society, in contrast, is egalitarian and peaceful. De Waal notes that, unlike chimpanzees, bonobos have great sensitivity to others. "The Bonobos form a gentle matriarchy, offering a provocative alternative to the male-based model of human evolution that

emphasizes man the hunter and toolmaker." Some of Freud's original theories were predicated on this latter premise. De Waal contrasts this orientation with that of the bonobos—the "make love not war" primates. Bonobos use an "astonishing range of erotic encounters to resolve tensions." The author suggests that the bonobo data open up new ways of thinking about man, gender, and the role of sex in maintaining equilibrium. De Waal presents the most up-to-date information on this important species. The volume is divided into six chapters and an epilogue.

Professor De Waal, in interviews with other primatologists, has pointed out that female bonding is emphasized in bonobo society. Without knowing why, bonobos avoid inbreeding (incest?) in order to facilitate survival: adolescent females leave their mothers and siblings to join a neighboring community and mate with unrelated males. The animals do not "know" why this occurs, but De Waal's assumption is that the tendency results from natural selection. "In the course of the species history, females who migrated produced healthier offspring than females who did not." Other fascinating discussions deal with female-female sexuality and the observations indicating that females dominate males. Male dominance is a standard mammalian pattern, but not in bonobo society. Males compete fiercely over rank, which is influenced by their mothers. Females can monopolize prized foods. Despite hostility between groups, there is also peaceful mingling. Other fascinating topics that challenge existing beliefs are those of copulation positions—face-to-face copulation was long thought to be uniquely human. Bonobos have face-to-face copulation, and their genitals are adapted for frontal intercourse, which is common among them. Females prefer the frontal position because it provides them optimal stimulation. Unlike females, males have sex with relatives (they cannot become pregnant), but females have sex with other females in the face-to-face position.

Infanticide among gorillas and chimpanzees is well documented. This can include eating the dead infant. The practice of killing newborns is apparently absent in bonobos. De Waal suggests this may be because the females have found a way to protect their babies. Other fascinating topics include the fact that females have what appears to be an orgasm; oral sex-fellatio is observed, especially among juveniles; male-male sexual stimulation that is masturbatory in appearance is found; "French kissing" is seen in bonobos but not in chimpanzees; and thumb sucking is observed in infants when weaning begins.

Although little more than 200 pages in length, this book is filled with observations, descriptions, data, and interviews with other experts. The findings, some tentative and in need of further research, bear on many facets and cherished theories of human behavior. De Waal's work is a pleasure to read, and the applications of his ideas to man are exciting. I eagerly look forward to his next contribution.

Because of space limitations, this review is somewhat frustrating to write. There is so much in this relatively brief volume that is worthy of emphasis, but selections have to be made—these are appetitive. One can dip into this volume at any point and be rewarded by aesthetic and intellectual nuggets. To enjoy and learn and speculate about the twists in man's evolution, however, the interested reader should consume the entire "meal."

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MUSIC AND ART

Jussi, by Anna-Lisa Björling and Andrew Farkas. Portland, Ore., Amadeus Press (Timber Press), 1996, 520 pp., \$39.95.

The human voice is the most beautiful of all musical instruments. We are programmed to respond to it as to no other sound, and this may be why those blessed few who have possessed a voice of tonal perfection and refined it into a musical instrument are objects of such intense public adulation. Jussi Björling (1911-1960) was, by nearly all accounts, the greatest lyric tenor of this century. Even Caruso's widow believed that Jussi was the only tenor she had heard fit to wear the mantle of her "Rico." Unique in its coloring and expression, Jussi's voice moved to tears even trained professionals. The ferociously authoritarian conductor Arturo Toscanini once stopped the orchestra during a recording session to hear him: "Just sing, Björling, sing!" One admires not only a rare vocal instrument but also the lifetime of dedicated study and practice through which he developed his gift to a supernal degree, adding his own exquisite musicianship and refined musical taste in the process. Happily, almost all of his recorded interpretations have been reissued on compact disc, and their steady volume of sales indicates a large (and growing) coterie of devoted fans.

A musician of such renown and celebrity challenges his biographers to avoid repeating the bits and pieces of his life widely distributed on dust jackets and in publicity pamphlets, while also clarifying the inevitable misinformation. In the 31 chapters of *Jussi*, the authors (Anna-Lisa is Björling's widow; Andrew Farkas is editor of the Opera Biography Series and co-author of several operatic biographies) call on personal experience, first-person interviews, archival material, and the singer's autobiography to present a fresh and accurate portrayal of Jussi's life in its brightest (and darkest) colors. In the frontispiece they apologize for the manner in which they will often interrupt a conversational style with material quoted directly from many other contributors, but the effect produces a convincingly authentic narrative of intimacy and warmth. The reader feels that he or she has been invited into Mrs. Björling's presence for a recitation of her personal experiences, with Jussi's friends, family members, fellow musicians, artists and stars, and music industry colleagues dropping in to add their own reminiscences.

Johan Jonatan Björling (nicknamed "Jussi" by his Finnish grandmother) was born into a professional musical family. His mother was a pianist, his father, David, a notable operatic tenor, voice teacher, and author of a text on singing instruction. His paternal grandfather was a tenor of some local standing in their native province of Dalarna, and two of his three brothers (Olle and Gösta) had fine voices as well. One could suppose a case for a genetic influence in the phenomenon of Jussi's vocal talent, nurtured by his father's tutoring, teaching, encouragement, and display of their talent (he formed the

brothers into a touring quartet after their mother's death in childbirth when Jussi was 5 years old). What must also be considered is the alcoholism that clouded Björling's entire adult life, depicted here unabashedly in all its destructive consequences on his marriage, his children, his career, and, ultimately, his own health and lifespan.

It has been noted that much of our enjoyment of a talented performer grows from our identification with the artist. We who are without such talent often see only the glory attendant to the performance and overlook the study, practice, and life styles of distorting singularity. The authors depict with jarring detail the months away from home and family, rigorous schedules arranged months and years in advance, overnight train and plane rides to small towns, the variable nourishment and accommodations of an effectively vagabond existence, and the calamitous effects on a finely tuned voice of sudden climatic changes (e.g., a wintertime engagement in Chicago followed in 2 days by a concert in Miami). Anna-Lisa's accounts of her many travels (Jussi insisted that she accompany him on nearly all of his months-long international journeys) with her temperamental husband, the strain of his lapses into drunkenness, the throat infections that threatened everything, and stormy contract disagreements with impresarios such as the Metropolitan Opera's Rudolph Bing, reveal a moving account of her almost mothering devotion to the star and the cost of all this to her own health and well-being (psychosomatic illnesses, multiple hospitalizations, and nearly separation and divorce). The description of Jussi's binge drinking—with the attendant anger, guilt, and despair generated in his children, family, and friends—is distressing to acknowledge but will be entirely familiar to the readership who deal with such patients in their clinical practice.

Jussi's early childhood and adolescent losses, as well as other traumata possibly contributing to his illness, will also stir a familiar chord. There is some reassurance in learning that Björling was given very good conventional treatment for his alcoholism: hospitalization, therapy, and even disulfiram (with which he sometimes complied but stopped taking whenever his urges to drink overcame him).

There are abundant anecdotes and vignettes of Jussi's life. Jussi's relationship with his peers was almost always warm, supportive, and felicitous, and there are numerous first-person "testimonials" to substantiate this. Most younger singers were openly in awe of him. Nell Rankin's recollection of a visit to her home by Jussi and his accompanist after a recital in Montgomery, Alabama, reflects her admiration and his easily approachable, convivial personality. Adding a new piece to his repertoire invariably included his making blue and red marks on the sheet music (often smiling and sad faces) to indicate the desired emotion or other emphasis for the passage, all of which was then committed to his phenomenal memory. His relationship with a predecessor, renowned Italian tenor Beniamino Gigli, was one of mutual respect and even affection. Rina Gigli recalls that Jussi called on her father shortly before the great singer's death from diabetic complications and gave him an affectionate and tender hug on parting. His accompanist once changed key on a recital piece at the last minute without telling him, resulting in a substandard rendition because Jussi could not anticipate the proper "placing" of his voice and "attacking" the notes in the new key (Jussi was properly angered by this embarrassment). Voice students will instantly recognize the problem and better understand that Jussi's was an art of practiced perfection beneath the apparently unlabored ease of his public presentations.

Björling was readily generous with his money (often involving expensive and impulsively selected items), his time, and

his talent. Church and civic groups were frequent beneficiaries of his benefit recitals ("I'll go crow a little bit to help them out").

Among the unpleasanties from which this biography does not shrink is the matter of Jussi's first son Rolf, born out of wedlock to another woman before his marriage to Anna-Lisa but acknowledged and supported by his father. Jussi's attempts to reconcile Rolf with Anna-Lisa and his other children failed because of Rolf's open and acrimonious dislike for her. The clinical manifestations of the heart disease (aggravated by his binges) that ultimately took Jussi's life and exacted their toll on the quality and number of his last performances are related in horrifying detail. Appallingly, Jussi's physicians apparently misunderstood the gravity of his condition and allowed him to continue the rigors of performing rather than sensibly urging his retirement.

The volume's text is enlivened by an abundant collection of photographs, 22 pages of chapter notes, three pages of bibliography, and 58 pages of Björling's repertoire and career chronology. The index unfortunately contains only the names of persons mentioned in the volume. While the list is extensive, and has subheadings for many of the entries, references to places and events would have made it more helpful to the reader with a taste for scholarship.

Anna-Lisa Björling writes that her biography intends to "convey Jussi's innate talent, warm humanity, and inner conflicts" and "to inspire not only the respect and admiration but the compassion and understanding that Jussi Björling deserves." Seasoned operatic aficionados and inveterate Jussi fans will find it gratifying, and readers finding this man for the first time may begin to appreciate the legacy of one of the century's great artists.

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Depression and the Spiritual in Modern Art: Homage to Miro, edited by Joseph J. Schildkraut and Aurora Otero. New York, John Wiley & Sons, 1996, 239 pp., \$68.00.

The enigma of art continues to grip us. Philosophers, art historians, psychoanalysts, and psychiatrists are among the many who have for centuries struggled to unlock the mystery, and one of the favored keys, at least since Aristotle, has been some correlation between creativity and mental disorder. The present volume, one of the latest links in this explanatory chain, is a handsomely produced coffee table book that elaborates the proceedings of a conference celebrating the centennial of the birth of the great Catalan painter Joan Miro, certainly one of the major figures in twentieth-century art and, it is suggested here, one of the many great artists who have suffered from, and have transcended, significant mood disorders.

Like many multiauthored books, this one is a mixed bag, combining some remarkably thoughtful essays by serious scholars with some vaporings by a number of well-known artists and art historians who succeed in demonstrating what often happens when creative people seek to express themselves outside the domains of their competence. The first section, *Mood Disorders and Creativity*, includes lucid and concise restatements (at times overlapping) of the now familiar studies of Nancy Andreasen (1) and Kay Redfield Jamison (2) establishing the prevalence of depression and bipolar disorder among creative persons, and a superb, sensitive piece by Carl Salzman on the treatment of the depressed artist, emphasizing

the variability of response to standard treatments and the effects of medication on creative powers. The review of the relevance of recent brain research to the understanding of artistic and "transcendental" experience by the Spanish neuropsychologist Jordi Obiols is highly informative (once he gets away from some Jungian speculations).

Part 2, *The Spiritual in Modern Art*, is the least successful; apart from Patricia Ballard's brief discussion of the well-known roots of Kandinsky's turn to abstraction in the theosophical ramblings of Madam Blavatsky, this section bogs down (at least for me) in ruminations about alchemy and other "spiritual" boilerplate that have little explanatory value about art in general or Miro in particular. It is in part 3, *Joan Miro*, that the book hits its stride, with Schildkraut's plausible psychobiography, linking Miro's depressive moods to his self-acknowledged "spiritual" longings. Best of all, however, is David Lomas' exposition of the social and cultural forces that shaped Miro's progression of self-portraits over the course of his career. It is a refreshingly cant-free work of scholarship, blending knowledge of art history with a sensitive understanding of Miro's wish for "transcendence" as an escape from personal and world-political travails. It alone is worth the price of the book. And Barbara Rose's demonstration of Miro's immersion in and identification with Catalan Romanesque wall painting and the Spanish mystical tradition compensates for some loose psychologizing (e.g., her repeated invocation of "regression" in discussions of Miro's style).

The final section of the book addresses the roles of "spirituality" and of affective disorder in American abstract-expressionist painting. Schildkraut documents the pervasiveness of depression and alcoholism in the ranks of the New York school painters (and, in the case of David Smith, sculptors), and the Akiskals offer a comprehensive psychosociobiography of Arshile Gorky, the quintessence of the dislocated and tormented artist, whose work, they show, was born of his Armenian roots and his profound, unresolved attachment to his mother and his motherland.

This book's strengths far outnumber its weaknesses. It is, as the editors propose, a gracious and deeply felt tribute to the memory of one of the giants in the art of our time and will enlighten and entertain those who are curious about (or who, like me, live their lives on) the borderland between psychiatry and art.

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The Threat to the Cosmic Order: Psychological, Social, and Health Implications of Richard Wagner's Ring of the Nibelung, edited by Peter F. Ostwald and Leonard S. Zegans. Madison, Conn., International Universities Press, 1997, 190 pp., \$32.50.

This book is edited by two psychiatrists, one of whom, Peter Ostwald, died in 1996. It is based on a symposium organized by members of the University of California's Department of Psychiatry and the Health Program for Performing Artists.

There are 10 contributors, including the second editor, Leonard Zegans. The last chapter is a discussion among panel members who include a journalist, four Wagnerian performers, a Wagnerian stage director, and a conductor. Some of the contributors, such as George Pollock and Fritz Redlich, are fairly well-known in psychoanalysis and medicine. Richard Wagner, whom Cross and Kohrs labeled “the greatest genius in the history of opera” (1) and about whom more than 10,000 articles and books were written during his lifetime alone, needs, in one sense, no introduction. Loved and hated, he is arguably the most controversial figure in history.

This book concerns Wagner’s *Nibelungen Ring*, a series of thematically related operas consisting of *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, *Seigfried*, and *Gotterdammerung*. To quote one of the contributors, Alessandra Comini, it is Wagner’s “tetralogy of creation and destruction” (p. 54). Although the focus is on the *Ring*, there is discussion of all 11 of Wagner’s major operas, from *Rienzi* through *Parsifal*.

David Littlejohn, moderator of the panel discussion on performance, interpretation, staging, and audience response to the *Ring*, gives his reaction to the net effect of the symposium’s presentations: “Now we’re meeting at a medical school and people have been hearing about how sick Wagner was and how sick Wagnerians were, and all sorts of bizarre, strange psychological stresses and strains involved in the *Ring*” (p. 173). Another panelist, Franz Mazura, a Wagnerian bass, moved by Littlejohn’s comment, observes wryly that it is possible to sing Wagner for a lifetime and to remain in good health.

On the one hand, potential readers of this book who are ardent Wagnerians, like the panelists, are likely to be repulsed by much of the pathologizing, deprecating analysis of Wagner the man and his *Ring*. On the other hand, Wagner haters will likely be offended by such statements as this by Ostwald: “Richard Wagner’s Ring of the Nibelung is one of the most impressive accomplishments ever created by the human mind, comparable in its artistic vision to Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel, in its historical proportion to Shakespeare’s plays, and in its musical originality to Beethoven’s string quartets.”

Fritz Redlich’s essay is a good example of the book’s negative tilt. He begins by considering the gratuitously inflammatory statement, “There is much Hitler in Wagner” (p. 131). However, he admits that his “knowledge of Wagner is too limited to allow [him] to deliberate on this topic.” Then, puzzlingly, he moves on to discuss the question, “How much Wagner is in Hitler?” What is paradoxical about this is that his characterization of Wagner as, for example, “hysterical,” “self-centered,” “greedy,” “elitist,” “sycophantic,” and “paranoid” would seem to imply extensive, in-depth knowledge of the man. Perhaps this derogatory point of view can be attributed in part to his citation of secondary sources such as Robert Waite’s *The Psychopathic God: Adolf Hitler* (2) in which Wagner and Hitler are linked and Wagner is accused of having “raped” his wife when she was 15 years old (p. 105). There is, of course, no evidence that Wagner raped anyone, let alone Minna, whom he did not meet until she was 24 years old.

The most unremittingly nasty essay in the book is Gutman’s “A Passion to Command and Demand.” It is no accident that Waite cites Gutman to support his rape charge against Wagner. This chapter smacks more of propaganda than of scholarship, functioning much like a World War II Hollywood film designed to show that, for example, the Japanese were subhuman monsters and having about as much credibility as those films. After 11 pages of frontal assault and sniping, Gutman writes, “By the end of his days, he [Wagner] had become a very sick and prematurely old man, fuming endlessly” (p. 23).

It seems not to matter to Gutman that Wagner, who died at age 69, spent the last years of his life focusing his energies on the completion of his monumental work *Parsifal*.

Other essays are more balanced and informative. Pollock’s “Notes on Incest Themes in Wagner’s *Ring* Cycle” has the merit of examining Wagner’s ideas themselves. For example, Pollock notes that “Wagner had referred to music bringing the unconscious to consciousness and in this he captures, too, the essence of psychoanalytic thought” (p. 80). There is some discussion of Wagner’s unique interpretation of the Oedipus cycle as well as a fairly lucid and cohesive description of the themes of each of his operas. Zegans also is able to see some redeeming features in Wagner’s *Ring* and is able to present, much as Shaw (3) did before him, a thoughtful analysis of the cosmology and of “insights in *The Ring* which seem prophetically relevant to our current moment in history” (p. 1).

This book does not entirely live up to Ostwald’s description of it as a “kaleidoscopic experience” (p. xii); it is not always beautiful or amusing. However, as in a kaleidoscope, no single, coherent vision emerges, and we are presented with disparate and fragmentary pictures as seen through bits of opinion, prejudice, fact, and fantasy. It is hard to know whom this book will please. It may be that its authors will have to content themselves with the justification that Wagner gave for writing prose: “I rejoice for the mere reason that I am always coming to a better understanding myself” (4). Hopefully, *The Threat to the Cosmic Order* will serve as a stimulus to a more systematic, in-depth, and thoroughly scholarly exploration of what Wagner himself said about music, drama, myth, dreams, the unconscious, evolution, and society—in contradistinction to secondary sources, which were relied on heavily in this book. As Schopenhauer has reminded us, “We get to know an author as a man most easily from his book . . . and in an autobiography it is so difficult to dissimulate, that there is perhaps not a single one that is not on the whole truer than any history ever written” (5).

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Otto Klemperer: His Life and Times, vol I: 1885–1933, by Peter Heyworth. New York, Cambridge University Press, 1984, 1996, 486 pp., \$54.95 (1984 edition); \$39.95 (1996 edition).

Otto Klemperer: His Life and Times, vol II: 1933–1973, by Peter Heyworth. New York, Cambridge University Press, 1996, 475 pp., \$39.95 (\$75.00 for two-volume set).

On July 16, 1935, the great German conductor Otto Klemperer directed his first Hollywood Bowl concert. Marlene Dietrich and many other émigrés from Nazi countries were in

attendance. But this was not the beginning of Klemperer's career.

In his youth he had won several piano competitions. He was a formidable pianist, with large hands and a big imposing frame at 6 feet 2 inches. At the age of 20, as an inheritance from his mother, he had his first major depression. This lasted for 2 years and was followed by a hypomanic period during which he fell in love with the female singers he was accompanying. When he was well he had to renege these attachments.

At age 22, Klemperer heard Gustav Mahler conduct the *Third Symphony* in Vienna. Klemperer adopted Mahler as his mentor, attempting to conduct both orchestras and operas as Mahler did. Whether depressed or hypomanic or in between—and this remained true for the rest of his life—Klemperer was an avid student of operas, languages, and symphony scores, which he memorized. He studied most productively when he was depressed.

Klemperer earned Mahler's friendship when he reduced the *Second Symphony* to a piano composition. Mahler himself had earlier arranged his *Fourth Symphony* as a piano duet in which he persuaded his future wife Alma to play with him when he was courting her. The crossing of hands was a particularly flirtatious aspect. Mahler died 6 years later at the age of 51. By then, his widow Alma had become Klemperer's fast friend. Their friendship endured through her marriage to the architect Gropius, her romance with the Polish artist Kokoschka, and her final long marriage to the writer Franz Werfel.

Psychiatric problems continued to interfere with Klemperer's career. When he was 31 (in 1916), he went into a deep depression after a quarrel with a colleague who had exposed Klemperer's romanticizing during hypomanic episodes. Klemperer entered a sanitarium briefly, then went to Kraepelin in Munich to ask whether he should be psychoanalyzed. Kraepelin wisely said that analysis was not indicated because Otto had no neurosis. The expressionist painter Al Kirchner was also a patient at the sanitarium and produced six depictions of Klemperer.

By 1917, even though he was hospitalized for depression for a few weeks, critics were writing rave reviews, citing Klemperer's "precision and lack of affectation . . . every detail [of conducting] seemed to stem from the depths of a creative imagination." In 1918, after a hypomanic month in a sanitarium, Klemperer conducted Wagner's *Nibelungen Ring* in Cologne.

During World War I, Klemperer remained staunchly in sympathy with Germany, although he said it was better not to have a Kaiser. Some said that Klemperer was a Marxist because he was known to have liberal leanings.

After the war, in 1919, while hypomanic, he converted from Judaism to Roman Catholicism. He was considered a devout Catholic, although he would express doubts as to Catholicism at times. In that year, he married Johanna Geissler, who had been a lead singer in several operas he conducted. Miraculously, he experienced neither "lows" nor "highs" for the next 5 years. The couple had two children—Werner, now known as a movie actor, and Lottie, who gave up much of her youth to protect her father. Johanna gave up her career to foster Otto's career. Ensuing hardships led to her secret alcoholism, but she remained true to Otto. After his indiscretions, Otto would always seek her out and beg like a child, "Let us be as always."

Klemperer's fame has rested on his conducting of both orchestras and operas. He was a composer as well and a prestigious pianist. He thought well of his compositions, put them on programs occasionally from 1919 on, and made recordings of all 27 of his compositions, among which are six operas and

two symphonies. The music critics were never enthusiastic about any of his compositions.

In 1920, in Cologne, Otto Klemperer's biggest triumph was conducting Beethoven's *Emperor Concerto* with Arthur Schnabel as the pianist. He and Schnabel became lifelong friends, and 1920 started Otto's international career. He conducted *Fidelio* in Spain. In 1921, Klemperer conducted *Petrushka* and became a close friend of the composer Stravinsky. In 1923 Klemperer conducted in Rome. There he met Toscanini, who became his model next to Mahler. Klemperer was then 37. He had already established himself as an outstanding conductor. Many violinists and other orchestra members would say that they never realized the depth and beauty of various symphonies until they played under his baton. "A work that one has heard one hundred times can be a revelation when Klemperer conducts it." This was so with Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*. In 1924, Adenauer sent a letter of commendation for the 7 years of pleasure Klemperer had given the city of Cologne.

By 1925, in spite of depressions and elations, at age 40 Klemperer had matured enough to give up Richard Wagner. He became a great interpreter of Mozart, then Beethoven and Bach, but he also embraced the new. It was he who introduced Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and Alban Berg to concertgoers in Europe and Israel. "His musicality spanned and drew nourishment from two worlds."

Klemperer was slow in comprehending the errors of the Nazis, but he left Germany as soon as he did. He had loved Germany and all the good things it stood for. By 1933, he had to recognize the dangers of National Socialism. He moved his family to Zurich. Soon, an invitation came from the New York Philharmonic. In 1934, Klemperer moved to the United States and became a citizen. But he disgraced himself in New York: while hypomanic, he was openly romancing a married woman. As a result, he lost his contract in New York. But Los Angeles beckoned and gave him a 6-year contract in 1935.

He was becoming deaf in his right ear and once took a bad fall. Psychiatric problems often affected him in those years, but he carried on until overcome by headaches, ataxia, dizziness, and weakness of the right hand and right side of the face. "I lurch to and from . . . I can swim, only getting in is difficult." There was no intellectual impairment. Klemperer was laconic about his symptoms, and hysteria was suspected as a cause, but by 1939, his cousin Dr. George Klemperer suspected a brain tumor. He persuaded Otto to go to Boston. There Dr. Gilbert Horrax removed a right neuroma the size of a grapefruit. Unfortunately, the facial nerve was severed in removing the angle tumor. (It still happens in about 10% of such cases.) As a result, Klemperer's right eye remained open and dry, feeling like a foreign body, and his mouth was distorted. Four days after surgery, Klemperer had an attack of meningitis. During his convalescence, he experienced the longest hypomania of his life, 2 years in duration. He worked and studied when it seemed impossible. His right side was weak, he needed help with all functions, and he wore a patch on his right eye. Plastic surgery was only partially successful. Some hemiplegia was evident for the rest of his life.

Even though disabled, Klemperer insisted on traveling, and in 1940 he engaged in a serious romance in New York. He gave a few great concerts in New York, all of which were oversold to thrilled audiences, but his irritability and impulsiveness terminated the New York welcome. At one point he was jailed for raising a water pistol to a policeman. Yet, he found other listeners all over the world, even though in Europe he was conducting sitting down. When "high," he would walk and flail his arms among the orchestra, correcting individual

players loudly and abruptly, needing no score. When depressed, he would sit glued to the score. Humorous comments and jokes disappeared with the brain tumor.

In 1946, Klemperer was a patient in Dr. Steinfeld's sanitarium in Chicago. Dr. Steinfeld gave him six brief and so-called light insulin hypoglycemic shocks (the nature of the treatment was not revealed to the patient) and 2 weeks of sleep treatments (possibly with amobarbital) followed by psychoanalytic sessions. My late husband, Dr. Eugene Ziskind, was asked to see Klemperer in 1947 and 1952 because he had been the physician who diagnosed George Gershwin's brain tumor. The question to be settled was whether Klemperer could benefit from ECT. Of course, no one dared interfere with Klemperer's prodigious memory. What would have happened to the 170 works by 45 composers he had memorized—symphonies, concertos, operas, and songs—if he had been given ECT?

Soon afterward, lithium treatment and prophylaxis and antidepressants were available, but psychiatrists prescribed only pentobarbital for insomnia and dextroamphetamine for depression.

Klemperer had suffered seven manic-depressive cycles by 1932, then 16 depressions and 21 manic phases from 1933 to 1973. In later years, depressions usually lasted much longer than the manic states. It made a bad impression when Klemperer played the piano only with his left hand (he had even taught himself to type), yet he continued to conduct until the age of 87. His last television appearance was in 1972.

Musicians either hated him or loved him and found a divine spark in him. There was no in-between. He owed money to everyone. He never paid a taxi driver, he never paid a doctor. His income was not as high as he deserved, but he wasted

whatever he earned and did not adequately support his family. (Once, Alma Mahler Werfel simply handed Klemperer \$2,000, no questions asked.) With his children, he was always sweet and concerned.

It was only when he was 87 that he retired willingly, decided to give up his adopted Roman Catholicism, and declared himself a Jew. At 88, he was buried in the Jewish cemetery in the hills above Zurich. Only a handful of relatives and close friends were there.

Dear reader, this is all in two very respectable volumes written by a conscientious music critic in London. Peter Heyworth is also the author of *Conversations With Klemperer* (1). The books represent a permanent document of a great musician's output and a very detailed clinical record of one of the most famous manic depressives of our century. I have a newsy, handwritten "thank you" note from him, signed "Your friend, Otto Klemperer."

Family members were very cooperative in giving the author intimate details of the conductor's life. Heyworth also thanks 300 other contributors, including Eugene Ziskind.

A guide to purchases of recordings is included in volume II. In both volumes, we have excellent reference material for both musical history and psychiatry.

REFERENCE

1. Heyworth P: *Conversations With Klemperer*. Winchester, Mass, Faber & Faber, 1985

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