

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.

FICTION

Spectacular Happiness, by Peter D. Kramer. New York, Scribner, 2001, 313 pp., \$25.00.

This is the audacious first novel from the author of *Listening to Prozac* (1), *Should You Leave?* (2), and *Moments of Engagement* (3). This rich and wonderful book defies distillation. Somehow Kramer successfully weaves together a poignant family saga with anarchist theory, suspenseful intrigue with social criticism, dark cynicism with hope for humanity. Reading this book (like so many things) will not be the same after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The story centers on a divorced community college professor involved in anarchist bombings of beach-front mansions on Cape Cod. Although the bombings are scrupulously orchestrated to avoid direct injury to people, Kramer's sympathetic portrayal of any type of terrorism may be troubling for some readers. Yet the provocative aspects of this book are in some ways prescient and, perhaps, especially relevant to a nation engaged in a war against terrorism.

The novel takes the form of a journal written by Chip Samuels, the divorced professor who deeply misses his son after the breakup of his family. Kramer's introspective narrative voice draws the reader into the psyche of the protagonist. Samuels is a sharply intelligent man whose personal wounds and principled views lead him on an increasingly high-stakes odyssey. Samuels addresses the journal to his son in an effort to explain himself and somehow bridge the distance between them.

On this poignant framework, Kramer builds a lively tale of an anarchist movement that targets ostentatious beach-front structures while fastidiously avoiding harm to people. The Free the Beaches campaign becomes a sort of terrorist performance art that challenges modern American capitalist values. Kramer's social criticism cuts deeply and widely, and he does not spare psychiatry. He questions our current readiness to medicate our children and ourselves, and he challenges conceptions of psychotherapy. Ultimately, he leads the reader to question his or her own principles and relationship with the prevailing culture.

This review cannot do justice to the breadth of issues Kramer explores. Most immediately, the novel charts a man's struggle to maintain integrity and keep his family together in the turbulent seas of the modern world, seas that can erode our foundations and threaten us with riptides and rogue waves of fate. Kramer resists simple formulas regarding motivation or how one might influence the course of events. Contradictions, unintended consequences, and ironies abound—the stuff of good fiction and interesting life.

Kramer's indictment of modern society is indeed penetrating, but ultimately he writes of people saving one another. He has written a subversive and triumphant work that asks us to do all we can for one another. The attacks of September 11 may complicate the feelings aroused by this book, but by all means read it and enjoy Peter Kramer's deeply thoughtful fiction.

References

1. Kramer PD: *Listening to Prozac: A Psychiatrist Explores Antidepressant Drugs and the Remaking of the Self*. New York, Viking-Penguin, 1993
2. Kramer PD: *Should You Leave?* New York, Scribner, 1997
3. Kramer PD: *Moments of Engagement: Intimate Psychotherapy in a Technological Age*. New York, WW Norton, 1989

TODD GRISWOLD, M.D.
Arlington, Mass.

Thinks..., by David Lodge. New York, Viking Press, 2001, 342 pp., \$24.95.

It is unusual to find a novel that comes complete with its own bibliography, particularly if the bibliography includes Daniel Dennett, Richard Dawkins, Antonio Damasio, Gerald Edelman, Stephen Pinker, and John Searle. One might anticipate a work that reads more like a seminar in cognitive psychology, and at times David Lodge's new novel *Thinks...* does:

That's Searle's Chinese Room, a very famous thought experiment. The idea is that this guy is receiving questions in Chinese, a language he doesn't speak or read, and he has a kind of rule book containing logical procedures that enable him to answer them in Chinese. He sits there all day receiving questions and giving out correct answers, but he doesn't understand a single word. Is he conscious of what he's doing?...

He argues that the man can't be conscious of the information he's processing, and inasmuch as he's acting like a computer program, neither can a computer program be conscious of the information it's processing. (pp. 51–52)

However, other passages don't read at all like a textbook. For example, a few hundred pages after the exposition on Searle's thought experiment:

He liked to get inside her quickly and copulate in various positions before he achieved his orgasm, bringing Helen to several in the meantime. He was immensely strong in the arms and shoulders, and flipped her effortlessly this way and that, over and under him, like a wrestler practicing "holds." Sometimes it seemed to her that he was straining too hard, that he wanted to reduce her

to a helpless quivering bundle of sensation, to force the astonished, languageless sounds of pleasure from her throat, to make her beg for mercy, slapping the mattress like a beaten wrestler. (p. 263)

Lodge moves rather effortlessly from essays on cognitive psychology to descriptions of steamy sex. His 10 previous novels are most well-known for their brilliant and often hilarious deconstruction of academia. (His deconstruction of deconstructionism in *Small World* [1] is priceless—he may have intended it as a spoof but I learned more about deconstructionism from it than I had from scholarly works on the subject.) Lodge, 66, is himself a retired academic (a professor of modern English literature at the University of Birmingham until 1987). He describes himself an agnostic Catholic—a theme that appears in several of his previous works and occasionally gets in the way in this one, where it describes his heroine. He is married to a teacher and has three children—a daughter who is a microbiologist, a son who is a lawyer, and a son with Down's syndrome.

Thinks... is a novel about consciousness. The plot is simple. Helen Reed, a recently widowed novelist, comes to the fictional University of Gloucester as a writer-in-residence. There she meets Ralph Messenger, who heads the program in artificial intelligence and human consciousness. Messenger explains his field to Reed (and to us), and she questions and challenges, suggesting that humanists in general and novelists in particular may know more than cognitive psychologists about consciousness, or at least more about the content (as opposed to the process) of consciousness. Messenger is more interested in the process. Meanwhile Messenger's marriage, his sex life (not the same thing), his family, and his health and Reed's idealization of her late husband and her depressive response to his death all get shuffled and reshuffled. The story is told in three voices: Messenger's dictation to a recorder as he experiments in what amounts to free association (although, interestingly, Lodge doesn't mention the concept); Reed's diary, typed on her computer; and the "objective" view of an impersonal third party. From time to time there are also e-mails and essays by Reed's students—the latter providing opportunities for Lodge to demonstrate his virtuosity at mimicking the styles of famous authors.

Lodge knows English literature better than cognitive psychology; as a result, although he has obviously studied extensively, the mini-seminars sprinkled throughout the text are closer to the level of Sunday supplements than graduate seminars, well below the level of his discourses in earlier works. He is an extremely intelligent writer—the plot, the style, the language, and the characters are all designed successfully to fit together. At times, however, the design is too apparent, almost intrusive, as though the book had been written as a classroom exercise by one of Reed's students.

Lodge is also a moralist, and virtue triumphs over vice, with virtue defined pretty much in the way one would expect a boy who grew up with a good Catholic education in the 40s and 50s to define it. At least Messenger's fatal moral flaw isn't related to his infidelity, or for that matter his sexuality. Befitting the theme of the book, he intrudes into Reed's consciousness, reading her diary without her permission, and she banishes him in retaliation.

The world implicit in the novel is based on a number of dichotomies that extend from the textbook to the novel—science versus humanism, brain versus mind, robot versus human, England versus California, love versus lust, and sex versus death.

This last theme emerges as a bit of a surprise late in the novel after Messenger, whose wife has been called to the side of her dying father, has a passionate sexual interlude with Reed. He then finds a lump on his liver and is worked up for a possible cancer. Lodge himself has recently reviewed a book with a similar theme—*The Dying Animal* by Philip Roth (2). The Roth book is simpler, a pure novel, one that focuses exclusively on the theme of sex and death. In his review (3) Lodge praises Roth as an artist and then has academic fun and scores a few points correcting Roth's technical and scholarly errors. (The ages of Roth's characters vary from novel to novel, and Roth seems unaware of the referents of a famous painting he describes.) Lodge then gets to the core—sex and death. Roth's professor, like Lodge's, is concerned with aging. For Roth, as for Lodge, cancer follows sex (this time in the woman rather than the man). Lodge ends his own novel by making the moral choice clear. He ends his review of Roth as follows:

What the author himself thinks is inscrutable, because of the chosen form. Like many works of modern literature, *The Dying Animal* ends on a note of radical ambiguity and indeterminacy. What is rather unusual about it is the way it challenges the reader at every point to define and defend his own ethical position toward the issues raised by the story. It is a small, disturbing masterpiece.

We can't say quite the same about Lodge's book. It is an interesting exercise. Several of its mini-essays are tours de force, and the novel in which they are embedded is clear, entertaining, and intelligent. It is certainly one of the most painless introductions to cognitive psychology and consciousness studies that is available. However, its clear moral compass challenges the reader too little and contrasts unfavorably with its recognition of intellectual "ambiguity and indeterminacy." The result is fun, but it is neither disturbing nor a masterpiece.

References

1. Lodge D: *Small World: An Academic Romance*. New York, Macmillan, 1985
2. Roth P: *The Dying Animal*. New York, Houghton Mifflin, 2001
3. Lodge D: review of P Roth: *The Dying Animal*. New York Review of Books, July 5, 2001, pp 28–32

ROBERT MICHELS, M.D.
New York, N.Y.

Kinship Theory, by Hester Kaplan. New York, Little, Brown and Co., 2001, 277 pp., \$24.95.

One way to divide the subjects of fiction is ordinary versus exotic—how different from the expected reader is the novel's hero? Many of the novels we tend to place at the core of the genre are ordinary in this sense—*Pride and Prejudice*, say, or *David Copperfield*, or *War and Peace*. It's not only a matter of social class; personality has a role. Readers are likely to be-

lieve they might respond to challenges as the heroes do, Elizabeth or David or Pierre.

Much modern fiction is exotic—strong first-person voice, highly particular setting, quirky or even offensive protagonist. Few readers are as anomic as Meursault, Camus's *Stranger*; fewer are as sociopathic as Quentin P., the serial killer who tells his story in Joyce Carol Oates's *Zombie*. For most readers of postcolonial or regional American fiction—those who live elsewhere—the book's charm resides in travelogue, and in the surprise of discovering the familiar in unexpected locales. Of course, all narrative is a mixture of ordinary and exotic—think of Dante's *Inferno*, where a most reliable narrator introduces a collection of grotesques.

Some years ago, I exchanged letters with an accomplished novelist over which form of fiction is more difficult to pull off. The exotic's magic is making the foreign sympathetic, even obvious. My contention was that today it may be yet harder to transform or energize the mundane.

All this is by way of explaining my admiration for a local—Providence, R.I.—writer, Hester Kaplan. Hester is a fixture here. She is at the center of the most successful writers' group; she teaches classes for beginning writers at the "Y." She is also, in my opinion, a yet-to-be-discovered master of a demanding craft, letting everyday detail speak.

Undiscovered is not quite accurate. Three years ago, Kaplan won the Flannery O'Connor Award for her collection of short stories, *The Edge of Marriage* (1). (It has just been reissued in paperback by W.W. Norton.) The characters are spouses, parents, and children who observe each other's failures at connection and experience their own near-misses, disasters barely averted. The stories are set in unnamed cities and suburbs. The writing turns sudden corners, in which character is revealed and the private opens onto the universal. A woman looks at a young man and in her mind commands him, "You shovel the snow yourself. You see how cold life can be."

In her debut novel, *Kinship Theory*, Kaplan takes a Hollywood-style high concept—a mother bears a child for her infertile daughter—and makes it serve the purposes of literature. Her method is to let her settings and characters remain otherwise ordinary, in the sense I have alluded to.

Maggie Crown, a medical researcher, lives in Newton Centre, a Boston suburb, in a modest house that has deteriorated steadily since her divorce 9 years earlier from her fastidious husband. Maggie is bearing a child for her daughter, Dale, who is not so grateful as Maggie thinks she should be for Maggie's gift. Once the child is born, it is not clear what sort of mother Dale will be or where Maggie's involvement should end. In an era when families have no fixed form and complex biological interventions are common, even surrogacy takes on the coloring of the routine.

What is extraordinary here is the evocation of intimate emotions and the moral freight they bear. How much hope is Maggie allowed, given the shortcomings of her first attempt at parenthood, with Dale? How much freedom is she permitted? May she drink? Enter into a desperate affair? How intertwined should our lives be with those of our children? How do those obligations arise? Maggie's responses to this altruistic pregnancy serve to define the parameters of parenthood.

Here is Maggie observing an interaction between her son-in-law and daughter:

When they pulled slightly apart, Nate began to pat Dale's back. There was something unsettling in his movement, its weightlessness, its attempt to console rather than seduce. It was how you might touch a person whose fears are real but tedious....Maggie knew she tended to watch too much, too closely, that she recklessly concocted scenarios out of inadvertent gestures.

But then, how aware may a mother be of defects in her daughter's marriage? Does it make a difference that the mother is entrusting the couple with an infant?

Finally, I don't know whether the contrast between ordinary and exotic can stand. There is no center, no privileged position from which to map the culture. But I continue to reserve a special admiration for fiction about characters with modest flaws, fiction that takes seriously the moral complexity of daily choices in settings where pressures are subtle and all the actors are of goodwill. Hester Kaplan's skill in that art makes her a writer to watch, and to read now.

Reference

1. Kaplan H: *The Edge of Marriage*. Athens, University of Georgia Press, 1999

PETER D. KRAMER, M.D.
Providence, R.I.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photolanguage: How Photos Reveal the Fascinating Stories of Our Lives and Relationships, by Robert U. Akeret. New York, W.W. Norton & Co., 2000, 240 pp., \$29.95.

No one *needs* coffee table books, but a lot of us enjoy them. What makes a good coffee table book? Many different things for many different people, I suppose. My preference is usually for some large engaging pictures, some beautiful and some at least a bit surprising, plus some but not too much text, both instructive and entertaining; some but not too much challenge; and a combination of both familiar and unfamiliar things. *Photolanguage*, a book by a psychoanalyst about looking at photographs, though less opulent than many coffee table books (no color, except on the cover; no full-page photos), will probably strike many readers of this journal as a pretty good coffee table book. It may also serve some students of photography as a pleasant and not too deeply psychoanalytic study of some meanings in photographs. "My premise," says the author, "is a simple one: there is more going on in most photographs than we usually see."

Akeret may have taken some inspiration from Ruskin, who, with his looking at art and nature and eloquently and carefully commenting on what he saw, is perhaps coming back into fashion. Ruskin said such things as, "The greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to see something, and tell what it saw in a plain way." Akeret is interested in the uses of photographs in looking and seeing, in life and, on occasion, in psychotherapy. His book is far more about meanings than about aesthetics, and he considers multiple meanings, e.g., meanings conveyed by the photograph's subject (if the photo is of a person), by the photographer, and by the observer of

the photograph. One might, I think, add to this list the publisher or boss of the photographer and the purchaser or user of the photo, since so immensely much photography now is photojournalism and advertising.

Akeret as a guide is pleasantly perceptive, capable of humor, and not too dogmatically sure of himself. "Do not always expect to agree with my interpretations. In fact, if you do, I will not have taught you well." To my mind, Akeret is an imperfect guide; he sometimes cheats a bit, and I think he does not quite give due weight to cultural and temporal context, but on the whole he is worthwhile and instructive, and he makes useful choices of illustrative photos. His major organizing themes seem to me to be time, power, passion, seduction (loosely defined), and identity. The photos are mostly from the past 10 or 20 years, making cultural context relatively easy for many viewers; few if any are from before World War I. Rather a lot of them are of famous people, e.g., Marcello Mastroianni, Michael Jordan, Joe DiMaggio, Monica Lewinsky, the Clintons, Woody Allen and Soon Yi, Prince Charles and family, Judy Garland, Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor, Ernest Hemingway, Richard Nixon, Lyndon Johnson, Janet Reno, Bill Gates, Hitler, Charles DeGaulle, Mao, Frank Sinatra, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Marlene Dietrich, Princess Diana, Marilyn Monroe, Laurence Olivier, Danny Kaye, Elvis, E.D.R. and family, Arafat, O.J. Simpson, Nadia Boulanger and Leonard Bernstein, John Paul Getty, Mario Cuomo, Marian Anderson, Josephine Baker, Winston Churchill, Eugene O'Neill and family, and Mayor Giuliani and Donna Hanover. Many are of ordinary people. Some are of people in emotional moments, some not. Some are of individuals and families seen in more than one photo, over time.

One of my favorites is of a major tobacco executive testifying at a Congressional inquiry: intense in itself and plausibly showing conflict. Another, much more peaceful, is of two Depression-era children sadly pushing a load of firewood along a country road. Of interest to knowledgeable APA members will be one of the powerful men behind then Attorney General Janet Reno in her photograph.

Photolanguage will help some of us to look better at photographs, at people, and even at our patients. It is a pleasant and instructive book to look at, to read, and to give to friends.

LAWRENCE HARTMANN, M.D.
Cambridge, Mass.

HISTORY

***Stalingrad: The Fateful Siege, 1942–1943*, by Antony Beevor.**
New York, Penguin Books, 1999, 493 pp., \$16.95 (paper).

Saturday, 21 June 1941, produced a perfect summer's morning. Many Berliners took the train out to Potsdam to spend the day in the park of Sans Souci. Others went swimming from the beaches on the Wannsee or the Nikolassee....In the Soviet Embassy...an urgent signal from Moscow demanded "an important clarification" of the huge military preparations along the frontiers from the Baltic to the Black Sea.

British historian Antony Beevor begins his narrative quietly, steadily, uneasily. Moving briskly between rapidly intensifying German and Russian scenes, Beevor provides some of the historical context for the events leading toward the terrible battle of Stalingrad. It was the eve of "Operation Barbarossa," Hitler's long-planned attack on Soviet Russia. The frightening speed and inexorable efficiency of that day's *Blitzkrieg* found the same swift success in Russia that it enjoyed in France, Poland, Norway, and the Low Countries. The German Panzers raced almost unopposed to the gates of Moscow. Hitler's hubris in delaying Barbarossa by 6 weeks (and the onset of the coldest Russian winter in 50 years) cost the Nazi's immediate capture of the Russian capital. With warming weather in 1942, the *Wehrmacht* renewed its offensive and sped to the Volga River at Stalingrad. Hitler coveted the city as a strategic and symbolic prize, and his staff believed it could be taken easily and quickly. Stalin resolved to defend his namesake city at all costs, and the ensuing horror became a personal battle of wills between two tyrants demonstrating their limitless capacity for inflicting cruelty.

Both armies suffered huge losses and unspeakable hardships as Hitler and Stalin interfered continuously with their generals' decisions, always with catastrophic results. The protracted ferocity of the round-the-clock, house-to-house, hand-to-hand combat in a city reduced to rubble introduced an unprecedented style of warfare. The technologically superior German army could not win the war of attrition as Stalin ordered wave after wave of poorly trained, inadequately equipped troops into the cauldron. Hitler's insane refusal to allow the encircled Sixth Army to retreat assured its destruction and made Stalingrad a turning point in the war in Europe as well as a landmark in the cruel history of warfare.

Working from official Russian and German state, military, and civilian archives, personal interviews with survivors and families, and a vast number of letters, diaries, and memorabilia, Beevor writes about the soldiers and citizens engaged in all levels of combat who were swept up into one of history's most vicious maelstroms. The tragedy proceeds in five dramatic sections—The World Will Hold Its Breath, Barbarossa Relunched, The Fateful City, Zhukov's Trap, and Subjugation of the Sixth Army—and 25 chapters. Factual, concise, with a historian's impartiality, Beevor nevertheless tells these stories of agony, terror, and suffering with empathy and affecting detail. An eyewitness account provides a moving vignette of high school girls repeatedly barraged while manning anti-aircraft batteries but resuming their fire after each attack. They were silenced only after intense bombardment by German artillery and Stuka dive bombers: "This...was the first page of the Stalingrad defence."

From under the debris "Ivans" rose up to decimate passing German patrols. The constant artillery bombardment and air strikes from both sides, meager supply lines, and onset of the Russian winter (−30°F) led to hellish conditions for everyone. The air in command bunkers became almost too stale to support life. Russian soldiers fought for days with only a piece of bread and insufficient, polluted water for rations. German soldiers, poorly equipped for the extreme winter, froze to death, lost limbs to frostbite, were tormented by fleas and lice, and were gnawed by rats. Both armies ignored Geneva Convention requirements, and prisoners, especially the wounded, were murdered, starved, or left out in the cold to

die. Desertions and defections were rampant on both sides despite summary executions of anyone caught trying to leave by waiting German SS and Russian NKVD cadres. The German commander, Field Marshall Friedrich Paulus, surrendered as his command position was finally overrun. While the conflict ended, horror and cruelty continued. The emaciated German survivors froze, starved, and died on "death marches" and in unsheltered prisoner of war camps (which easily matched the barbarous conditions and treatment inflicted by the Germans on Russian prisoners of war). Many of the freed Russian prisoners were executed by the NKVD for the "treason" of allowing themselves to be captured.

The final chapter begins approximately 1 year after the conflict and chronicles the apotheosis of the battle and its heroes, the postwar lives of some of the leading actors, and the enduring effects of it all.

Beevor's narrative is so engrossing that readers will feel in doubt of the outcome, sympathizing with combatants on both sides without regard for the better or worse of the two hideous political regimes. Though an exact body count at Stalingrad will never be known, the author includes appendices summarizing the appalling civilian and military losses, another on source notes, and a 10-page select bibliography to help readers pursue special interests in greater depth. Two sections of photographs heighten the pathos of the saga, and multiple area maps provide useful references for understanding the rapidly changing battle scenarios. After more than half a century, Stalingrad is remembered as one of the most horrible and historically important sieges in the annals of modern warfare. Antony Beevor will show you why.

WILLIAM EDWIN FANN, M.D.
Houston, Tex.

The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America, by Louis Menand. New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001, 546 pp., \$27.00.

Karl Popper—The Formative Years, 1902–1945: Politics and Philosophy in Interwar Vienna, by Malachi Haim Hacohen. Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 2000, 610 pp., \$54.95.

Both of these books give us information about our post-modern era, one in which the question of truth has become a central issue in philosophy. This movement perhaps was initiated by Nietzsche in his famous preface to *Beyond Good and Evil* (1), asking what it would be like if truth were a woman who was fickle, changeable, and had to be continually seduced. The whole epistemological trend in the 20th century has been away from foundationalism, or what Popper called "essentialism," the belief that through the use of intuition (e.g., see Bergson's philosophy), or the "animal faith" or "intuition" of Santayana, or the "ciphers" of Karl Jaspers and his "philosophical faith" (illustrated in my recent publication [2]), it would be possible to identify permanent essential truths in the sciences and in the field of ethics as well as other humanistic disciplines.

Both books under review here use essentially the same methodology and assumptions, although they present two incompatible views on the nature of "truth"—that of the pragmatists and that of Karl Popper. The two authors, Louis

Menand and Malachi Haim Hacohen, view the formation of theories by predominant thinkers as evolving from the historical events of their times and from their specific cultural milieu. So both books pay a great deal of attention to each milieu and to the enormous variety of historical influences, including war, that they believe had a crucial role in the formation of the personalities, presuppositions, methodologies, and theory formation of the thinkers under discussion.

Louis Menand, Professor of English at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, is an experienced writer, offering us felicitous prose that moves along at a pleasant clip. In spite of its catchy title, *The Metaphysical Club* is not about metaphysics and not about clubs; it is about contemporary conceptions of truth and the relationship of the observer to the observed. These topics were addressed by a group of very loosely associated thinkers after the Civil War in the United States. Their ideas were brought to later fruition in the well-known work of John Dewey, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., William James, and Charles Peirce. These men, along with others, belonged to an informal discussion group that met for a few months in Cambridge, Mass., in 1872 and called itself the "Metaphysical Club" out of irony; these thinkers were actually engaged in the demolishing of Hegelian metaphysics and replacing it with various precursors of what came to be known as American pragmatism.

Menand's basic approach is not to offer a book on philosophy but, rather, to trace the personal and social situations that he believes led these seminal thinkers to lose faith in "certainty." This approach, of course, carries the risk of committing the well-known genetic fallacy in philosophy; furthermore, the thinkers in the Metaphysical Club were very loosely associated intellectually. Menand's style of anecdotal writing allows the book for the most part to hang together, although at times it tends to go off in tangents that are only barely relevant to the subject. This results in a lot of name dropping that can become tedious.

Menand's fundamental thesis is that the Civil War destroyed the intellectual culture of the Northern United States just as World War I destroyed the intellectual culture of Europe. For example, the lesson Holmes took from the Civil War was that certitude leads to violence, and this, although Holmes never specifically accepted pragmatism, caused him in his subsequent judicial life to attempt to facilitate the expression of opposing and different opinions. In Menand's view, Holmes, Peirce, and James are linked together in their contention that ideas are tools for getting tasks accomplished rather than more or less "true" representations of any fixed or essential "reality" outside the observer.

These thinkers viewed human mentation as forming ideas and beliefs in order to cope with a world that is contingent and ruled by Darwinian chance rather than providential design. Thus, Holmes came to characterize all believing as essentially betting: since we cannot know what is right or true, we must make bets based on experience. So William James is quoted as saying in 1907, "Truth happens to an idea. It becomes true, is made true by events" (p. 353). Pragmatism, according to Menand, was the prevalent American philosophy from the 1890s through the 1930s; it fell out of favor in the 1950s, but, he says, it has emerged into prominence again along with the end of the cold war.

Although the book contains 100 pages of notes documenting his research, Menand's narrative is not hard reading and offers a pleasant educational experience. Whether one agrees with his thesis about the origins of pragmatic thought and its importance is another question. There is no doubt that Holmes in his Civil War experiences lost his belief in beliefs and developed an idea about the limits of ideas. According to Menand, Holmes "thought that rightness and wrongness are functions of the circumstances in which our lives happen to be embedded" (p. 63). Holmes is quoted as saying in 1918, "Men to a great extent believe what they want to" (p. 63). How true!

The authentic genius behind the pragmatic thrust was the eccentric and self-defeating Charles Sanders Peirce. Menand convincingly traces the flailings and flounderings of this unfortunately disturbed individual as he careened from defeat to despair while at the same time remaining almost fanatically devoted to the basic problems of philosophy. Even the efforts of his politically well-connected friend William James were unsuccessful in establishing Peirce's academic career, which Peirce himself so often torpedoed. James was finally forced to raise money to ensure Peirce's literal survival.

In 1879 Peirce began another Metaphysical Club, and John Dewey became an active member. Much of the latter half of Menand's book is taken up with the work and contributions of Dewey. As Menand cleverly puts it, "In later years Dewey deliberately adopted an antirhetorical style, in the belief that readers should be persuaded by the cogency of the thought rather than the felicities of the prose. He was uncommonly successful in getting rid of the felicities" (p. 304). Some of the differences in the generally pragmatic approach of these four thinkers are also spelled out nicely by Menand. The bottom line of the pragmatism of all of them was,

There is no noncircular set of criteria for knowing whether a particular belief is true, no appeal to some standard outside the process of coming to the belief itself. For thinking just is a circular process, in which some end, some imagined outcome, is already present at the start of any train of thought. (p. 353)

One of the main thrusts of the pragmatic movement was against the much more popular movement of experimental psychophysiology, a positivistic approach to the human mind that allowed lots of measurements and statistics but simply left out the human. This problem is still with us today! However, even Menand recognizes that pragmatism has serious deficiencies as a school of thought. It provides no way to judge whether an interest is worth pursuing, nor does it explain where we get our desires, a crucial question asked by Sigmund Freud and others. It has no explanation for why people develop wants and beliefs that can lead them to their own destruction; this does not seem to be mentation in the service of coping and adaptation! In spite of this, Menand claims that pragmatism is again being taken seriously in the United States, and anyone familiar with the writings of the prominent philosopher Richard Rorty (3, 4) might agree. I highly recommend this well-written book to all who are interested in what constitutes truth and how the ideas and beliefs that underlie scientific investigation and determine its results are de-

veloped. I have focused elsewhere (5) on these issues in psychiatry and psychotherapy.

In the second book reviewed here, Malachi Haim Hacohen clearly idealizes Karl Popper and considers him one of the greatest philosophers of all time. His book deals with the most famous of Popper's publications, especially *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (6) and *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (7). The former was published in 1945 while Popper was an émigré in New Zealand, and the latter was published in 1935 in Austria, so the book deals with the "young" Popper, from his birth in 1902 to 1945 (Popper died in 1994). Hacohen is Associate Professor of History at Duke University, and his intellectual upbringing began at Bar-Ilan University in Israel and continued at Columbia University; this book is an extension of his Ph.D. dissertation. In addition to doing a great deal of scholarly research, Hacohen interviewed Karl Popper in January 1984 for 4 hours, but it is not clear that this was a particularly useful experience. Hacohen specifically states that he will not write a second volume about the "mature" Popper, who was born and raised in Vienna, emigrated to New Zealand in 1937, and settled in England in 1946.

Hacohen views Popper's thought as superseding that of Dewey, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein as a more effective version of nonfoundationalist (nonessentialist) options and as the best solution to postmodern dilemmas. Popper is distinguished from the poststructuralists and pragmatists by his belief that we can approach the truth from experience, especially from errors. Popper attempted to apply his theory of how science ought to progress to the methodology of all fields of endeavor. The method of science, as Popper saw it, was the creative production of hypotheses that could lead to predictions that in turn could be verified or negated by experience. So Popper regarded any discipline that does not lead to empirically verifiable predictions, such as Marxism or psychoanalysis, as a pseudoscience.

Popper made quite an impression when he first put forth these ideas; to a certain extent they were Popper's reaction to the famous Vienna Circle of logical positivist philosophers. Hacohen recognizes that he was "writing as much a book on interwar Viennese culture as on Popper" (p. 8). Hacohen's book abounds with innumerable names of thinkers who may or may not have influenced Popper, and the average reader will have difficulty in identifying many of them unless he or she is quite well versed in philosophy and the social sciences. This makes this very scholarly book rather difficult reading; at times it seems excessively long.

Popper was an extremely unpleasant person. He had no tolerance for differing ideas and was totally preoccupied with his own narcissistic interests, making enemies wherever he had to work with colleagues. He was extremely inhibited in the area of sexuality, advocating a prudish, outmoded morality. He hated psychoanalysis, and he was utterly intolerant of the needs of others unless they could serve some purpose for him. His wife devoted herself to him as a "selfobject," typing and retyping his many manuscripts and living in exile in New Zealand with him in a most unhappy state. Hacohen adds, "It is difficult to imagine another woman sustaining a life-long relationship with this difficult man" (p. 179). Popper's two sisters were also rather disturbed; one committed suicide and the other seems to have been promiscuous and unattached.

Popper suffered throughout his life from bouts of depression and hypochondriasis, although he lived to an advanced age. He was a disturbed, difficult youth and began a number of projects that he never finished; this continued even in the first years after World War I, “for Popper a period of loss of direction and constant experimentation” (p. 107). One of his projects was teaching; apparently a student under his care had a fatal accident that seemed to affect Popper in an existential way. After that occurrence, which Hacoheh calls the “1925 tragedy” (p. 131), Popper avoided political engagement and focused on his intellectual interests and his professional career, ending his years of rebellion, antibourgeois life style, and unconventional life pattern. Mercifully, Hacoheh, a professional historian, spares us from speculative psychoanalytic interpretations of these events. He simply tells us that Popper’s life “represented a singular fusion of hope and anxiety, openness to change and attachment to habit, critical awareness of one’s self and mistrust of friends who refused him blind protection” (p. 148). In *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (7), Popper created a model of natural science; he extended this model to social sciences in both *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (6) and his methodological treatise, *The Poverty of Historicism* (8).

Popper believed that no scientific theory could ever be conclusively verified or declared true. All we can do is repeatedly make predictions and attempt to verify these predictions and so approach conviction about the correctness of the theory in an asymptotic manner. Scientific theories, he says, are simply regulative ideals or logical fictions constructed for the purpose of deducing predictions for their testing. This was the fundamental idea that Popper followed in his various writings: all science is falsifiable and hypothetical. The demarcation between science and metaphysics is simply whether the theory can be falsified; so he asked of both Freud and Adler, “Under what conditions could your theory be falsified?” If there were no such conditions, then from Popper’s point of view the theory could not be called a science and was in the area of metaphysics. He differed from the positivists in that he was not trying to eliminate metaphysics and philosophy but simply trying to prevent the contamination of the sciences with metaphysics—to keep them separate on the principle of demarcation that he proposed.

For Popper, science progresses not by discovering essential truths but by eliminating errors. The basic statements of science, which are there for the purpose of predictions and testing, are simply relative, transitional, and conventional. Hacoheh accepts Popper’s philosophy and insists, “This was the end of foundationist philosophy” (p. 231). He argues that “Popper got it right” (p. 235) but at the same time admits that “antifoundationism has become today almost an article of faith” (p. 234). Hacoheh speaks only briefly of some of the pitfalls of Popper’s theory, but philosophers of science have generally considered Popper’s description of how science works to be inaccurate; Kuhn’s description (9) has largely supplanted it. What is felicitous about Popper’s thought is his recognition that speculation and faith cannot be eradicated from science: “All empirical sciences develop historically from metaphysics” (p. 247). Theories are creative activities; what makes them science, says Popper, is if they lead to predictions that can be verified or falsified.

Popper was extremely grandiose. He was surprised that his book on the logic of scientific discovery did not change the course of the world overnight, and he regarded the adoption of his book on the open society as a necessity for the survival of the human race. He was an “eternal dissenter and intellectual loner” (p. 303) and suffered from a persecution disorder: “In postwar years, he was convinced that an academic conspiracy existed to diminish his philosophy” (p. 303). His colleagues recognized him as a genius but found his personality extremely offensive and were reluctant to help him. What gave him an enduring name was his critique of Marxism, which was used by politicians as a weapon to depreciate Soviet Communism, something that was far from Popper’s intent. This was an instance of a book emerging in the cold war that was published in the right place at the right time, ensuring the popularity of its lucky author.

Popper decried “historicism,” the insistence by some thinkers like Marx that history has a pattern and a scientifically predictable development with inevitable results. Popper attacked the use of this kind of thinking in an attempt to create utopias. However, Hacoheh writes, “Most classicists regarded Popper’s totalitarian Plato as scandalous; Hegel scholars dismissed his Hegel as a myth; and Marxists attacked him as a liberal apologist” (p. 383). Popper’s move to England facilitated his rise to fame, but, Hacoheh tells us,

He became progressively isolated among British philosophers. It did not take long before his tactless conduct brushed against their easy sociability. Many admired his seriousness and abilities but found him insufferable. (p. 525)

Popper became a fellow of the British Academy in 1958 and was knighted in 1965. His students “found him unreceptive to any published criticism and ungracious in his responses” (p. 537).

For the serious reader who is willing to pay close attention, *Karl Popper—The Formative Years, 1902–1945* offers a great reward because it provides the basis for an in-depth understanding of the still unresolved problems of what constitutes truth and what constitutes scientific endeavor. These issues, which in the 19th century were considered obvious and firmly established in the correspondence theory of truth, have now moved to the center of current philosophical and scientific debate. For psychiatrists and psychoanalysts they have immediate and very important ramifications, and each of us, whether we like it or not, will have to take a stance on what we consider to be “truth” or “facts” in our mental health sciences.

References

1. Nietzsche A: *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886). Translated by Kaufmann W. New York, Random House, 1966
2. Chessick R: *Emotional Illness and Creativity*. Madison, Conn, International Universities Press, 1999
3. Rorty R: *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1979
4. Rorty R: *Consequences of Pragmatism*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1985
5. Chessick R: *What Constitutes the Patient in Psychotherapy*. Northvale, NJ, Jason Aronson, 1992
6. Popper K: *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, vols 1, 2. Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1971

7. Popper K: *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*. New York, Harper & Row, 1965
8. Popper K: *The Poverty of Historicism*. New York, Harper & Row, 1964
9. Kuhn T: *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1962

RICHARD D. CHESSICK, M.D., PH.D.
Evanston, Ill.

Ether Day: The Strange Tale of America's Greatest Medical Discovery and the Haunted Men Who Made It, by Julie M. Fenster. New York, HarperCollins, 2001, 278 pp., \$24.00.

We admire inventors. We have a picture of the inspired tinkerer working in a basement perfecting the gadget that will change the world. And we like things simple. It's easiest to think that an invention springs full formed from the mind of its inventor, as Edison produced the light bulb, Marconi the radio, and the Wright Brothers the airplane. Of course, this is too simple. There are predecessors who sparked the inspiration and counterclaims and sidebars to explain how invention is so often a group process, even if we credit one inventor.

So who invented anesthesia? If you learned a name for this invention, it was probably William Thomas Green Morton. He turns out to be the most colorful and rascally character in this wonderful book, but he isn't the only one. The invention of anesthesia was one of the most divisive issues in medicine in the 19th century. Fenster has dug up an amazing story of the origin of the first great advance in modern medicine and tells it in a lively and dramatic fashion. Her book doesn't start off lively because she has to tell us how operations went before anesthesia was applied. We are used to surgical suites being in the bowels of a complicated hospital building, but they used to be at the top of the towers of the hospital. This provided plenty of light, but it also meant the patient could scream his head off, with the noise released to the outside with as little echo as possible within the halls. Opium might be used, but it produced nausea and death. Liquor might produce a drunk patient, but this would not necessarily mean the patient was insensate, and he or she might become belligerent. Mesmerism had some sensational successes, but most physicians thought it a humbug. Ice could help some, and sometimes patients were bled beforehand until they fainted. There was nothing that worked well. Edward Everett wrote, "I do not wonder that the patient sometimes dies, but that the surgeon ever lives."

Nitrous oxide, discovered by Priestley in 1772 and known always as "laughing gas," was an intoxicating entertainment. At parties, balloons of the stuff would be available for guests, and traveling shows would charge money for taking a snort of the gas and then make more money by exhibiting the intoxicated to audiences. Samuel Colt operated such an exhibition to finance the beginnings of his revolver factory. Another exhibitor was Gardner Quincy Colton, who brought laughing gas to Hartford, Conn., in 1844. A local dentist, Horace Wells, tried the gas and made a fool of himself in some unspecified way, according to his wife. A friend of Wells cut capers across the stage and banged up his knees against a settee. The friend felt nothing until the gas wore off. Wells made the connection from stage amusement to clinical tool, and, in the tradition of self-experimentation, had a colleague take out one of his

teeth while he was under the gas, which Colton provided. After waking, Wells proclaimed, "I didn't feel so much as the prick of a pin!"

Nitrous oxide was perfect for dental extractions, which were painful but brief. It was not adequate for long, major operations, but it might work for minor ones, and as early as 1800 Sir Humphry Davy in England had suggested as much. Ether also began to be used as an entertaining intoxicant; it had potential for surgical anesthesia as well but was not so used. There is no good answer to the puzzle of why it took physicians so long to banish pain from their surgeries. It may have been largely that the jolly highs produced by ether and nitrous oxide obscured any potential for practical use. Before Wells, they were amusements and not tools.

The 23-year-old Morton met up with Wells in 1842. Before that time, Morton had been run out of cities such as Baltimore, St. Louis, and Cincinnati by a simple business expedient. He would forge letters of recommendation, buy goods on credit, sell them, and abscond with the money to the next place. He did this several times before he was 21 and thus was able to plead that he was not accountable due to his youth. (Fenster writes, "William Morton started over many times more than the average person, but then his mistakes disappeared from his mind, long before they had a chance to turn into remorse.")

The cunning and unscrupulous Morton decided to settle down and become a dentist under Wells's tutelage. He then moved to Boston, and the tangled tale of attribution becomes impossible to comprehend completely. He met Charles T. Jackson, a chemist and geologist, who later maintained that he suggested the use of ether for dental extractions. Morton insisted that he had experimented with ether on animals beforehand and gave a trumped-up story of how, in September 1846, he extracted a tooth from a patient under ether who never even realized the procedure had been done. Morton wanted to make money from his "invention" of ether and did what no self-respecting physician would ever have done: he patented it, thus breaking a tradition of giving gratis to the practice of medicine any advance in the reduction of human suffering.

Morton was invited to administer ether before a rapt audience at the Massachusetts General Hospital on October 16, 1846, known by historians of anesthesia as Ether Day. The surgery, a removal of a neck tumor, went perfectly. The patient was without suffering, and the surgeon turned to the audience in the operating theater afterwards and proclaimed, "Gentlemen—*this* is no humbug." Cheers erupted. Morton's place in history was forever made. But the wily Morton could not make it pay. He tried to market a patent concoction called Letheon, a mixture of ether and oil of orange, but everyone guessed that it was only the ether that did the business, and so the patent was useless. There was a tradition in Europe that those who had granted boons of science to humanity would be rewarded by generous sums of money; America had no such tradition, but, to the end of his life, Morton vigorously petitioned Congress for \$100,000 to recompense his benevolence. Jackson learned to despise him and dug up the dirt on his youthful sociopathy. Jackson and Wells both claimed to have made the basic discovery and opposed any monetary award for Morton.

Indeed, Morton got medals and fame for what he had done, but it never made him rich, and rich was what he wanted to be. Wells experimented with chloroform, which was an effective anesthetic but more dangerous than ether, and became addicted to it. Arrested for throwing acid onto prostitutes while he was chloroformed, Wells killed himself in jail. Jackson never got the recognition he was sure he deserved for the invention of ether, which only compounded the bitterness he felt about his belief that he had also given Morse the idea for the telegraph. He spent the last 7 years of his life in an asylum.

None of the inventors got what he wanted. This is a complicated tale, wittily told. We have no one hero on which we can bestow the title of Inventor of Anesthesia. In fact, Fenster reports a competing and prior claim by Dr. Crawford Long in Georgia, who used ether to remove a swelling on a patient's neck in 1842. This is a messy history, entertainingly told.

ROB HARDY, M.D.
Columbus, Miss.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND BIOGRAPHY

The Noonday Demon: An Atlas of Depression, by Andrew Solomon. New York, Scribner, 2001, 571 pp., \$28.00.

It all began when a very talented writer inexplicably fell prey to the Noonday Demon, an excruciating state of depression, initiating an odyssey of which this book is the issue. The report is permeated with the victim's relentless honesty, curiosity, and passion to understand his own fall and to share the fruits of his scholarly journey. It is a pretty remarkable journey, and both treaters and sufferers of depression alike stand to gain from it. Perhaps others as well.

In the service of his goal to master, demystify, and destigmatize depression, Solomon candidly reports the intimate details of his own horrendous illness and what he gleaned from his reflections and research. His tale begins with self-observations of suffocating despair, a suicide attempt, and the effects of copious psychotropics and psychoanalysis. Solomon interviewed more than 100 clinicians, researchers, fellow sufferers, mystics, politicians, and charlatans, and he read hundreds of books, reports, and letters. His bibliography contains nearly 900 items and includes the scientific literature that enabled him to write clearly of the biochemistry of depression and its pharmacopoeia.

The book sparkles with the author's adventures as an intrepid investigator. He traveled to Cambodia to discern the aftereffects of the Khmer Rouge horrors and to Greenland to study depression among the Inuit Eskimos. He went to Senegal to partake of *ndeup*, an elaborate animist ritual cure that required five dancing native women, five drummers, and Solomon's lying naked with a ram who was slaughtered, being covered with the animal's blood, and participating in a celebratory feast of the animal's flesh. He conversed with depressed people who were indigent and visited state mental hospitals. He took cocaine, smoked opium, swallowed Ec-

stasy, sky-dove, and did Outward Bound. He witnessed his mother's self-induced euthanasia and reports on the antidepressant effects of committing an act of violence in a fit of rage.

Clinical anecdotes salt the pages of *The Noonday Demon* and vividly document the complex texture of depressive symptoms. These stories provide the hearth from which the author launches expositions into different aspects of his topic: biochemistry, therapies, epidemiology, history, sociology, politics, evolution, suicide, and related sallies ordered by the author's insatiable curiosity. He makes a full case for the notion that depression is a symptom that gives rise to a complex of other symptoms. Nothing fits neatly into one basket, and, inevitably, where there is no cure there are many treatments. He warns of charlatans, but clinical variations validate the need for therapeutic options, and although he is open to all responsible alternatives, he champions the methods that served him: psychotropics, psychoanalysis, self-study, love, and determination. He is an especially strong advocate of early and long-term use of antidepressants, convinced by his studies that untreated depression promotes treatment-resistant chronicity. Solomon notes, amid concern with the subtleties of etiology, treatment, and prevention, that the incidence of depression among the poor is greater than twice the national average, and it goes mostly untreated.

As ever, perhaps the freshest discoveries derive from clinical material. Reading this book, I gained, among other things, greater clarity that suicide isn't just about aggression. Pain and despair create other dynamics: "I didn't plan my suicide because I hated myself; but because I loved myself enough to choose not to live this pain." Another patient: "I cut myself to distract me from the crushing despair. It was my only pleasure." Getting out can become an imperative. Solomon says: "It is up to each man to set the limits on his own tortures... [and] knowing that if I could get through this minute I could always kill myself in the next" made it possible, at one dangerous point in his illness, to survive.

Finally, a note on the value of depression. That depression can be a personal train wreck is known to us all, but the transformative effects in recovery are less well documented. Because depression is on an emotional spectrum with normal sadness and suffering, it contains the power to confer a brotherhood of sorts. This patient speaks for many: "Depression has given me kindness and forgiveness where other people don't know enough to extend it." It does appear that occasions of serious sadness or suffering often influence one toward empathic caring and personal growth. More concisely stated by the French psychoanalyst, Julia Kristeva: "The imprint of humankind...is refined in sorrow." Solomon believes that his depression taught him the value of intimacy, tolerance, and his own compelling need to help others. I doubt that he is now the same man who once lost himself in a fit of violence. He summarizes: "I do not love my depression, but I love who I am in the wake of it." That person is alive, intelligent, generative, and kind; however he got that way, he commands our admiration and appreciation for this valuable book.

JUSTIN SIMON, M.D.
Berkeley, Calif.

Leonard Warren: American Baritone, by Mary Jane Phillips-Matz. Portland, Ore., Amadeus Press, 2000, 520 pp., \$39.95.

One of the defining dramas of the storied Metropolitan Opera House is the onstage death of one of its greatest stars. In March 1960, while performing Verdi's *La Forza del Destino*, the great baritone Leonard Warren completed his Act II aria, *O Gioia* ("Oh Joy"), and pitched forward dead. That evening, for one of the very few times in its history, the Met's show did not go on. Warren was the preeminent Verdi baritone (a term explained by Tony Randall in his edifying foreword) of the 20th century. He and tenor Jussi Björling (1) were arguably the finest male operatic voices of the past 100 years. They were born in the same year (1911), and by a tragic coincidence both died suddenly and untimely of heart disease in 1960.

The truly great operatic voice leaves an enduring (and endearing) impression on the listener. The beauty of Björling's high C in *Che gelida manina* (from Puccini's *La Bohème*) still rang in the ears of *New York Times* music critic Howard Taubman years later (2). Though I never heard Björling live, I will remember the awe of attending Warren's performance in Verdi's *Rigoletto*. His huge, beautiful voice filled the auditorium "like black smoke" (to borrow Randall's term). His stage presence, acting, impeccable diction, and ability to convey the range of emotion essential to that role was unrivaled: there could be no doubt when Warren's *Rigoletto* was angry, mocking, frightened, frustrated, piteous, or chagrined, as he used the full reach of his artistry to win the adulation of his audience. I was hooked for life.

Phillips-Matz, a musicologist and award-winning biographer of Giuseppe Verdi and other notables of the music world, draws on her own friendship with Warren, multinational archival source materials, and personal interviews with family, friends, and colleagues to paint a three-dimensional portrait of her subject. The effect allows the reader to appreciate Warren as a mostly ordinary young man who struggled to master and perfect his gift. The obstacles were several: ethnic and social prejudice, lack of musical training and musicality, and difficulty learning the material quickly. Inability to read music is not unique among operatic stars (said of basso Ezio Pinza and tenor Luciano Pavarotti), but it added enormously to Warren's struggles, requiring an extra degree of determination and grit in learning the music and perfecting the roles. Warren's determination and perseverance won the encouragement of musical authorities and financial support from benefactors who were convinced of the nascent greatness of his gift.

In the first two of 21 chapters Phillips-Matz highlights the European culture of Warren's ancestors as a contributing factor in arousing his musical and artistic interests. Born Leonard Warenoff in New York City, the son of two Russian Jewish immigrants of solid middle-class heritage and circumstance, he was expected to take over the family furrier business. But Warren was an "indifferent and listless student in the New York public schools," did poorly at any of several early jobs, showed no aptitude for the stage, and played no musical instrument. Even as a child his "major asset was his big voice," which, fortunately for us and posterity, he chose to develop as his life's vocation. After a sprinkling of voice les-

sons he began to sing professionally for private parties and at Catskills area resorts. At the age of 23 he was admitted to the Radio City Music Hall Glee Club. Even in this group Warren had to struggle for recognition. He was fired by the director when he asked for time off to prepare for an audition at the Metropolitan Opera.

Warren's major career turning point came in this audition, when audition master Wilfrid Pellitier, astounded by what he heard, agreed to take Warren under his professional wing. He arranged for voice lessons and recital opportunities, obtained private funding for a summer of study in Italy, and became his life-long friend. On return to the United States, Warren was given roles of gradually increasing importance within the Met company, but again he faced anti-Semitism and the preference of the autocratic director Rudolph Bing for established stars in the high-profile and prestigious opening-night roles. Engagements overseas gained Warren star status in foreign opera companies, very favorable publicity, and elevated status within the Met company. Warren was eventually granted leading and opening-night roles; his consummate artistry, especially in the great Verdi operas, brought him acclaim, recognition as one of the opera world's premier performers, and Bing's staunch advocacy. He enjoyed this heady status until his premature death.

Phillips-Matz concentrates a great deal of attention on Warren's performances, career highlights, many warm relationships, and daily life. Warren fell in love with and married American singer Agatha Leiffen, whom he met in Italy. Marriage required that he convert to Roman Catholicism, which he did with the approval of both families. While the marriage brought Warren a life-long supportive, loving relationship, he found himself ostracized by some of the other Jewish artists. Phillips-Matz rounds out her portrait of the man with some of his more temperamental and less attractive qualities. Having worked very hard to train his own voice and refine his roles, he became an unsparing, self-critical perfectionist. He also required the same flawlessness from fellow artists and could be overbearing and intrusive (even to the orchestra) during rehearsals. There are several illustrations of behavior attendant to such peccadilloes that ranged from mild to outrageous. But the heart of this book is Warren's virtuosity. The details and vignettes recounting Warren's performances (his conquests and the occasional failure) at the Met, in world opera companies, and on concert tours will fascinate the opera aficionado. The final chapter painfully details the events and circumstances surrounding his onstage death (including some grisly details of the fatal fall), providing sometimes conflicting eyewitness accounts from members of the audience, orchestra, cast, stage crew, and family.

We cannot know how frequently such an extraordinary vocal endowment arises, but clearly it is rare indeed. We can only be grateful that in this case it was bequeathed to someone who committed to the years of sacrifice, training, and persistent effort needed to present his gift so grandly to his public. Phillips-Matz has conveyed Leonard Warren as a human being with foibles, mastery, weaknesses, and genius, all with the affection and respect that draws our captivated gaze toward a triumphant artist.

References

1. Björling AL, Farkas A: Jussi. Portland, Ore, Amadeus Press, 1996

2. Taubman H: *The Pleasure of Their Company*. Portland, Ore, Amadeus Press, 1994

WILLIAM EDWIN FANN, M.D.
Houston, Tex.

***Comfort Me With Apples: More Adventures at the Table*, by Ruth Reichl. New York, Random House, 2001, 302 pp., \$24.95.**

Comfort Me With Apples is the continuation of *Gourmet Magazine* Editor Ruth Reichl's story of her life, so ably begun in *Tender at the Bone* (1). In that volume she told of her early years in a household shared with her often manic mother and an overwhelmed, passive father who retreated to work, leaving her at home with the problems: "My father, looking apologetic and unhappy, conveniently came up with a big project that kept him in the city." "I remember watching the way his whole body relaxed as he stepped in [to the elevator], on his way out of the house and off to the world of work." Her means of dealing with her mother's mania and apparent inability to taste and/or distinguish pleasant and healthy from bad and spoiled food (27 guests at a fund-raising party were hospitalized with food poisoning) is presaged in the photograph of Ruth at age 7, standing on a chair at the stove, solemn and self-possessed, stirring the pot and preparing the family's meal. Blessed with useful and important surrogates—her father's first mother-in-law (Aunt Birdie), her "maid" and companion (Alice), and a binge-drinking housekeeper (Mrs. Peavey)—Ruth learned both to cope and to cook. "They had prepared me for my world." *Tender at the Bone* presented a series of vignettes worthy of the old *Reader's Digest* Most Unforgettable Character series, vivid succinct portraits that left the reader wanting more. It ended with Reichl's first marriage to a good young version of a surrogate father who could nourish and protect her and insulate her from her mother and her intrusive pathologies and unpredictabilities.

Comfort Me With Apples, which continues Ruth Reichl's story, can be read as the story of three overlapping interlinked relationships: her first marriage, an affair, and her second husband ("the reluctant gourmet"). Her first husband was affectionate and caring, protective and pleasant, but there was little passion. To borrow language from the other text of her life and books, this first marriage was like a good soup without salt; the affair was almost all spice with little emotional substance; and her current husband a hearty soup, salted, spiced, and with real body, a meal in itself. Despite the miracle of this relationship, it was accompanied by tragic difficulties: unable to become pregnant, Reichl and her second husband adopted and loved a child who was reclaimed by her biological parents. However, Reichl later became pregnant and has a growing son. Interleaved with the story of these relationships is a trip to China, the death of her father, and evidence of her growing autonomy and maturity.

The other text of both books deals with eating, with food, and with the sensual experiences associated with the required act of ingesting. In contrast to her mother, Reichl appears to have been blessed with a taste version of the remarkable phenomenon of perfect pitch: unusual sensitivity, acuity, and memory for smells and tastes. (One can wonder: defensive? reactive? chance?) She moved on from cooking for her family to cooking for a 1970s commune in which she and her husband lived, and then to working in a restaurant. She then be-

came a restaurant critic for West Coast magazines and newspapers and, after a several-year stint at *The New York Times*, she moved on to *Gourmet Magazine*. Her writing about food and eating is continually reminiscent of the oyster-eating scene in the 1963 movie of Fielding's *Tom Jones*: every bite an erotic promise, a delight for the initiated, a temptation for the naive:

The scrambled eggs with truffles were even better than the foie gras....Each forkful was like biting off a piece of the sun. It was like musk and light, all at once, and suddenly I burst out, "This is what I always imagined sex would taste like." Afterward we had raspberry ice cream that was the color of a Renaissance sunset. I held it in my mouth, loath to let the flavor vanish. Just churned, it did not taste as if it had been made by human hands. The cream seemed straight from nature, from happy cows who had spent their lives lapping up berries and sugar.

Comfort Me With Apples is also a history of the last few decades of American cooking: from James Beard and M.F.K. Fisher to Alice Waters and Wolfgang Puck. Each chapter ends with one or several appropriate recipes.

Many years ago, E. James Anthony described a group of children of disturbed mothers who managed to survive multiple traumata and to do well. Ruth Reichl is one of his "dandelions"; she managed to flower in arid soil. She took her talent and her surrogates' teachings and turned them into a life. As she said of M.F.K. Fisher,

She actually makes you pay attention to your next meal, feel more alive because you're doing that. When you read her you understand that you need to respect yourself enough to focus on the little things of life. She celebrates the everyday by making it seem momentous.

An apt description of Reichl herself. Read, eat, and enjoy!

Reference

1. Reichl R: *Tender at the Bone: Growing Up at the Table*. New York, Random House, 1998

WILLIAM A. FROSCH, M.D.
New York, N.Y.

UNDERSTANDING THE HUMAN BRAIN

***The Seven Sins of Memory: How the Mind Forgets and Remembers*, by Daniel L. Schacter. New York, Houghton Mifflin, 2001, 257 pp., \$24.00.**

Fragments, Benjamin Wilkomirski's Holocaust memoir about his life as a child in a concentration camp, won acclamation when it was published. Unfortunately, it turned out that Wilkomirski had spent his childhood with foster parents in Switzerland. When confronted with the documented facts, he still insisted his recollections were real. "Is Wilkomirski simply a liar?" asks Daniel Schacter, who describes the incident in his new book on memory. Schacter's answer is, Probably not; he is forgiving because he finds there is compelling

evidence that we are all prone to some level of such distortion. Schacter is Chairman of the Harvard Department of Psychology and one of the leading authorities on memory. Memory's imperfection is the subject of this his second book distilling memory research for the general reader. His inspiration was the idea that the imperfections of memory could be described as the seven "deadly" sins: transience, absent-mindedness, blocking, misattribution, suggestibility, bias, and persistence.

Memory research is important if painful reading for the generations of psychiatrists who were trained to help patients sort out their past, to "reconstruct" childhood experience, to work through their repression, and get to the reality of lived experience. Schacter's account of the research makes it impossible to believe any of this is humanly possible—at least if one thinks the purpose of such efforts is to get to the definitive truth of the matter and not just to create an aesthetically satisfying narrative of the self.

Schacter's account of the research on memory makes it clear there is no accurate videotape, no carefully kept files, no part of the brain that contains the original photographs in mint condition. There is no reason to expect that we and our patients can somehow overcome the seven sins.

Schacter is clearly writing for the general audience, those aging baby boomers who are beginning to recognize the sins of their own memories, and they are lining up to buy this book. Schacter is not a physician, but he has a natural bedside manner. He explains and reassures his readers at the same time. He is at his best summarizing dry academic research and extracting the relevant kernel of useful information.

In the last chapter of his book Schacter speculates about the sins of memory from an evolutionary perspective. This will probably give his readers a sense of closure, but to my mind it is the least successful part of this superb book. That one chapter could have been written by a science writer rather than by a scientist who also happens to be a wonderful writer. Still, I enthusiastically recommend this book to every psychiatrist; like all of the best books in psychology, this book will leave you with a new understanding of yourself, your patients, and the human mind.

ALAN A. STONE, M.D.
Cambridge, Mass.

***A General Theory of Love*, by Thomas Lewis, M.D., Fari Amini, M.D., and Richard Lannon, M.D. New York, Random House, 2000, 288 pp., \$23.95; \$13.00 (paper published 2001 by Vintage Books).**

This ambitious work tantalizes but does not quite deliver. It attempts to pull together numerous lines of scientific inquiry into a working model of how love arises from the function of the mammalian brain, culminating in an appeal to promote interpersonal attachment in order to combat an array of psy-

chological ills. The authors' attempt to validate love scientifically is well-meaning but ultimately reductionistic and could have the (unintended) effect of debasing human love if its arguments are taken too seriously.

The book begins with a compelling explanation of the "triune brain." It covers how various levels of neural function evolved, as manifested by comparative anatomy of the brains of reptiles (capable of sophisticated motor responses), mammals (capable of affective attunement due to development of the limbic system), and humans (capable of self-awareness due to development of the neocortex).

Appropriately, the case is made that most aspects of our subjective experience are actually felt before they are "known." There is an erroneous conclusion drawn from this, however, that the "knowing" brain cannot affect or direct the limbic brain—even though the limbic brain clearly affects its lower predecessor (the reptilian brain) in terms of influencing basic physiological responses such as heart rate.

Details are next provided on possible mechanisms (drawn from studies of neural networks) for what is termed the "limbic resonance" that occurs between individual organisms. The authors assert that this is a fundamental substrate of what we call love and proceed with a cascade of speculation that might more aptly be titled "A General Theory of Rat Love Extrapolated to Humans."

Much of the authors' argument is based on an exaggerated version of the scientific knowledge base on attachment behavior in mammals (including man). Although they correctly assert, for example, that extremes of environmental deprivation impair development (the point is well-established scientifically and bears great emphasis), they do not substantiate their conclusions that less extreme (more typical) variations in the rearing environment operate to determine an individual's developmental capacity for love. The book essentially ignores the scientific literature on behavior genetics, which has repeatedly indicated that rearing practices do not contribute very substantively to population variation in emotional and behavioral development, except when the early environment is extremely deficient.

By reducing the phenomenology of human love to their notion of limbic resonance, the authors avoid the central issue of whether human love is a function—or representation—of free will (as might occur if there is such a thing as unconditional altruism). Although they advocate for people making decisions to invest in limbic love, they never incorporate into the theory a mechanism by which that investment can occur by choice and therefore be meaningful. This omission deals a fatal blow to the edifice on which the book, in its final sections, proposes a new psychotherapy of relationships.

Intuitively, the authors are probably right that investment in love is a very good thing, but intuition doesn't always make for good theory or for good science. Love deserves better.

JOHN N. CONSTANTINO, M.D.
Saint Louis, Mo.

Reprints are not available; however, Book Forum reviews can be downloaded at <http://ajp.psychiatryonline.org>.

Correction

In the article "N-Methyl-D-Aspartic Acid Receptor Expression in the Dorsolateral Prefrontal Cortex of Elderly Patients With Schizophrenia" by Stella Dracheva, Ph.D., et al. (September 2001; 158:1400–1410), the following sentence should be added to the second paragraph of the footnote on page 1407: "Stella Dracheva, Ph.D., and Salvatore A.E. Marras, M.S., contributed equally to this study."