

Freud understood clearly how human beings come to abdicate pleasure, freedom and love, and willingly, happily, deliriously subordinate ourselves to authority and power, is intriguingly, even sometimes powerfully, presented, but there is little new in *The Death of Sigmund Freud* for a reader already familiar with Freud and with psychoanalysis.

Edmunsen is particularly compelling when discussing the reluctant importance that being a Jew played in Freud's life, writings and ideology, and when describing how Freud's desire to live and write conflicted with his cancer and weakness for big fat cigars. It is, in short, when Edmunsen humanises Freud that this work is most effective, as a very personal biography, of a particular man marching towards death.

In 'Vienna', Edmunsen shows Freud and Hitler in the same world, walking the same streets, circling one another, but only to show them as completely alien to one another, rather than illustrating the more remarkable case that these were, in fact, two men who did inhabit the same world and walk the same streets. For Freud, the Nazis were not a 'special invention of the Germans' (p. 83), but a particular manifestation of an inevitable human drive. What Edmunsen could have made more apparent is that while they were not a special invention of the Germans, the Nazis were an invention, a technology that was, like the radio or the automobile or the theory of relativity or psychoanalysis itself, particular to a certain culture and point in time. Freud was not surprised that the Nazis came to be a force in Europe because he understood human nature, and also because he understood his age.

That Freud's ideas are relevant today should also not come as a surprise to anyone, and really should hardly need restating, since Freud's world is our world too: a world of fascism and fundamentalism. We flatter ourselves if we think that our world, our problems, our fascists and fundamentalists are so different from his. That all of this is not made immediately apparent in *The Death of Sigmund Freud* is, I think, at least in some part due to the Freud with which Edmunsen presents us. In any biography the subject is reconstructed by the author, though this is truer for no-one more than Sigmund Freud. Edmunsen's chosen Freud is the romantic hero, the man who often stands apart and rebels against the petty restrictions and regulations of his culture. Since Freud, or at least a part of Freud, liked to see himself in this way, Edmunsen's portrayal is not unjust, and it is certainly a character with whom we have become familiar over the century of Freudian scholarship. It is just that this portrayal of Freud somewhat clouds our understanding of the historical Freud, and an appreciation of how his ideas work, then and now. Further danger of indulging too much in the romantic view of Freud is that it opens the door to exactly the sort of tyranny that Freud warns us to avoid, and which Edmunsen otherwise intelligently addresses: the overinvestment in the hero and the abandonment of ambivalence for the easy comforts of authority.

Edmunsen's conclusion is somewhat confused, mirroring too often I think Freud's naïve and vain belief in Enlightened 'civilisation' with Edmunsen's own naïve and vain belief in 'democracy', and I suppose that it is unfair to expect Edmunsen to provide a thorough consideration of the socio-economic bases for modern fundamentalism, but his conclusion offers narrow views of some more potentially difficult and complex issues.

I would dearly have liked to have loved this book, but I do not because it does not sufficiently challenge my understanding of Freud, psychoanalysis, a certain historical moment or the modern world. However, as an introduction to Freud, Freudian theory and Freudian thinking on group behaviour, it is exceptional: clear, accessible and intriguing. This book about the death of Sigmund Freud will make Freud come alive, and provide a good launching

point to go and then read Fromm and Winnicott. Or, even better, to go and read more Freud.

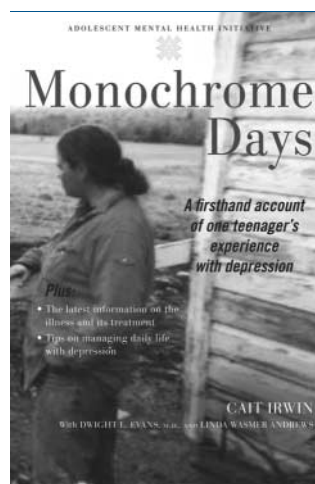
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Trouble in My Head: A Young Girl's Fight with Depression

By Mathilde Monaque.
Vermillion. 2007. 176pp. £7.99 (pb).
ISBN 9780091917239



Monochrome Days: A Firsthand Account of One Teenager's Experience with Depression

By Cait Irwin with Dwight L. Evans
& Linda Wasmer Andrews.
Oxford University Press. 2007.
184pp. £17.99 (hb).
ISBN 9780195310047

Autobiographical accounts of illnesses and disorders have enjoyed huge popularity in the past decade. There has been a glut of publications of every sort; on every conceivable condition, from the points of view by every conceivable person concerned with the disorder. There have been numerous reasons advanced for why a person would share in print, experiences that have caused them considerable distress. Cait Irwin in *Monochrome Days* candidly admits to using it as personal therapy whereas Mathilde Monaque is at some pains to stress her altruistic credentials in ensuring the redemption of her readers. The differences do not end there.

Irwin's tone is measured and her prose lucid. She does not need to take refuge in hyperbole or a sensationalistic need to 'shock' her audience into awareness and acceptance. Her account is reinforced throughout by sound evidence base from a psychiatrist done in a very naturalistic fashion within the text. The use of a journalist to investigate and report on male depression is intriguing but understated.

There are valuable pen pictures of the internal landscapes of depression as befits an artist and author. She describes a

particularly moving account of her own and her mother's thoughts prior to her first appointment with a psychiatrist. It is a salutary lesson for any mental health professional on how many unspoken hopes and fears hinge on that first contact.

There are useful lists of further reading, frequently asked questions and bibliography presented in a very non-intrusive fashion. At no point is there a feeling of sterile facts blandly laid out in the manner of regulation health promotion fact sheets.

The only minor irritant was the grey sidebars of information about males with depression that interrupt the text. Even in acknowledging the need for the material, I found their content distracting me from the thrust of the main material and wished it had been done differently.

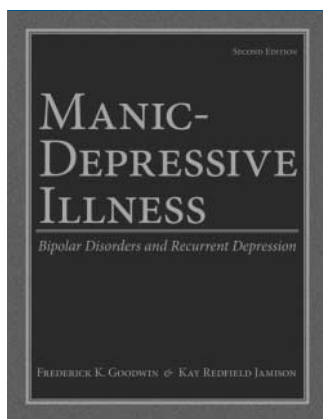
Very different were both the style and content of Monaque's account of her 'fight' against depression. Even accounting for an average adolescent's self-absorption it is difficult to escape the feeling that this book is a self-indulgent rant. Her tone alternates between being condescending and contemptuous. The egocentric account leaves the reader with very little information on depression but with a great deal of extraneous information on what it is like to be Mathilde Monaque. The pathos of the account is purely unconscious: that of a young person surrounded by a prickly hedge of defences and rationalisation, afraid to connect with her audience. The discovery of her being a 'gifted' adolescent goes some way towards explaining her alienation but does not explain the anger that runs through her narrative. The subtext of an eating disorder further muddies the waters.

It is difficult to assess how this book would be read by its presumed adolescent audience but I would have some misgivings in recommending it, given the little value it places on the treatment process. The best of this book is the very sincere afterword by her psychologist which gives a succinct account of adolescent depression and is a reflection of a relationship of trust between a troubled adolescent and a concerned adult which is probably the cornerstone of all successful therapy.

I could not have been asked to review two books on the same topic that approached the subject matter more differently – one I would readily use for psychoeducation but the other is what I suspect an adolescent would actually read and empathise with.

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**Manic-Depressive Illness:
Bipolar Disorders
and Recurrent Depression
(2nd edn)**

Frederick K. Goodwin
& Kay Redfield Jamison.
Oxford University Press. 2007.
£60.00 (hb). 1288pp.
ISBN 9780195135794

The first edition of this book appeared in 1990 and it rapidly became the standard work on bipolar disorder. Some of the tables are still very useful as reviews of specific topics. However, since

1990 there have been changes and advances, including broadening of the clinical concept into a spectrum, accumulating neuro-psychological studies, use of functional imaging, emerging molecular genetic findings, much expansion in clinical use of anticonvulsant mood stabilisers accompanied by better evidence, and a recent burgeoning of randomised controlled trials of psychological treatment approaches. There have also been those sure signs of specialisation – a journal and a scientific association. A second edition is therefore timely.

Now part-way to being multi-authored, fifteen collaborators wrote first drafts of chapters which were then revised by the two authors. The collaborators are not attributed to specific chapters, although you can sometimes guess, and I believe it would have been better to know explicitly. The general approach is still consistent and unified.

The authors declare a Kraepelinian orientation, regarding severe recurrent unipolar disorder as closely linked to bipolar, and decrying the widening of unipolar disorder to the milder non-recurrent disorders now included in most diagnostic schemes. In truth, nevertheless, this is a book about bipolar disorder. The attempts to include unipolar disorders tend to be desultory and inconsistent, in contrast to the excellence of the bipolar material. There is, for instance, no chapter on depression in the elderly, although some of the studies of vascular depression are mentioned elsewhere. The book is generous to the newer spectrum of bipolar disorders, dismissive of the unipolar one. This is not a book that would be of use to the general practitioner to guide understanding and management for the milder cases of major depressions seen in the surgery every week.

This is a single large volume, about a third longer than the first edition, which most readers will use as a reference work. The chapter list is extensive. There are many references and summary tables of research. The references are listed by chapter in a large section at the end of the book losing the advantage of easy finding with the relevant chapter, without gaining the alternative advantages of a single unified list. For a British readership, although the references are comprehensive and international, there are some gaps. The self-help resources listed are all American, and the chapter on follow-up studies omits the two classic papers from the same issue of the *British Journal of Psychiatry*, by Lee & Murray and Kiloh *et al*, which established the high recurrence rates shown by many cases of severe, hospital-treated unipolar depression. The index is fairly large, but it is so indispensable for anyone who wishes to look up specific topics and studies that the authors might consider one day making a searchable CD-ROM of the text available.

The chapters are spacious and sometimes discursive, usually prefaced by a quotation from a patient or a classical figure, with following sections on history and methodology. Much of the material is research-oriented, with detailed summary tables of studies. In the earlier chapters I found particular highlights in those on epidemiology, genetics, assessment scales, and neuropsychology. The treatment chapters are more practical in approach, with less summary of the evidence base than in the first edition. The chapter on neurobiology is the longest, at 140 pages, and is particularly comprehensive and detailed. I would guess it to have been authored by Frederick Goodwin with Huseini Manji, a listed collaborator, since their combined credentials to look over the field are excellent. Sadly, and no fault of the authors, the field it exposes is still confused and inconclusive. A particular masterpiece is the chapter on creativity, which bears the hallmarks of having been written by Kay Jamison. Herself a person of remarkable creativity and with manic-depression, she has written most movingly elsewhere on her personal experiences, has made large scientific and educational contributions to the field, and is also