

inveigled bogus patients into psychiatric hospitals, then it was psychologists who claimed that psychosis was only some point on a dimensional scale of human distress. Now philosophers wade in but, note, steer clear of madness and debilitating mood disorders, as if the problematic nature of narcissistic personality disorder undermined the entire psychiatric enterprise.

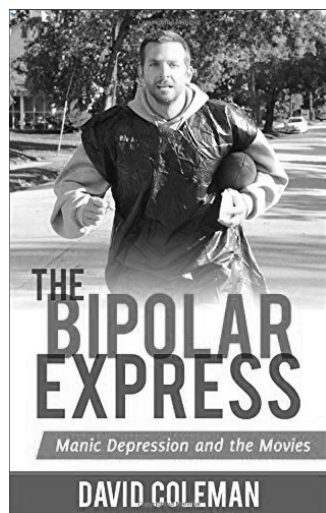
Second, no credit is given to the insight that people with schizophrenia and depression themselves provide into the nature of the human being. Eugene Minkowski, a French psychiatrist, saw clearly nearly a century ago that the former held a philosophical idealist position and the latter a materialist position, completely undermining philosophical notions that the 'normal' human being could be one of these. 'Philosopher cure thyself' might be salutary advice for a philosopher presuming to disabuse psychiatrists of their mistakes.

Third, no cognisance is taken of those philosophers, outside the Anglo-American tradition, who realised that the human being is a spiritual entity as well as an animal, and that psychiatric disorders are not 'natural kinds' of things such as gold (which the author seriously considers) and are not even like physical illnesses.

I could go on. Luckily, psychiatrists, certainly of my acquaintance, are made of stern stuff and are unlikely to be worried by the new wave of critics of their profession.

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The Bipolar Express: Manic Depression and the Movies

By David Coleman.
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2014.
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ISBN: 9780810891937

David Coleman's theme is declared in his subtitle, to which he brings credentials as a produced screenwriter who knows about bipolar disorder from the inside. He argues for what he calls 'bipolar cinema' – that body of film work which portrays the disorder in its on-screen characters, or is created by people who experience it. He argues that bipolarity enhances the perspectives of these film-makers and therefore the work they produce: and further still, that many film-makers effectively use their work as a kind of therapy.

He argues his case with a decade-by-decade survey of cinema from its very beginnings to 2012's *Silver Linings Playbook*, picking out in detail many cases of films and film-makers to demonstrate his central theses. There is clearly something in this, and some of his examples, such as Charlie Chaplin, provide strong backing to his argument. But he undermines his position by overstating it, in prose which is by turns breathless or overwrought and which uses

the near-sneering term 'neurotypicals' to describe those who do not have bipolar disorder.

Although Coleman pays lip service to the existence of other mental disorders, he repeatedly falls back to the implied view that all mental disorder is manic depression and any portrayal of mental instability or distress in movies is a portrayal of bipolar disorder. He goes further: any film made by someone with bipolar disorder – whether it is about mental disorder or not – is part of 'bipolar cinema' which 'can be argued to include every slasher film ever made, as well as nearly every film noir, war movie, superhero film and other genre variants in which psychopathologies are examined (however inaccurately)'. That is a lot of movies.

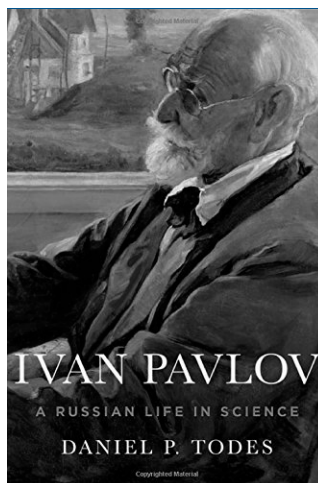
A single case in point: he includes in the canon of bipolar cinema the 1962 adaptation of Scott Fitzgerald's semi-autobiographical classic novel *Tender is the Night*. But Fitzgerald, like his protagonist Dick Diver, was an alcoholic, and his wife Zelda, like his heroine Nicole, had schizophrenia.

Coleman also risks alienating his fellow screenwriters when he asks: 'if a director or actor is bipolar should every film or performance therefore be included [in the filmography of bipolar cinema]?' The implication is that either all the output of writers with bipolar disorder is so classified, and they are therefore defined by their condition in a way other film-makers are not, or they are the anonymous surrogates who first bring films to life but whose progeny are immediately adopted by others.

By overstating his case, Coleman does himself and his subject a disservice, because the meat of the book is a well-researched resource about films portraying – or made by – those with mental disorder. Interested readers are advised to buy it for that meat, even if they do not swallow whole the message.

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Ivan Pavlov. A Russian Life in Science

By Daniel P. Todes.
Oxford University Press USA. 2014.
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ISBN: 9780199925193

The great Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov (1849–1936) is usually remembered as the man who trained dogs to salivate at the sound of a bell. Indeed the term 'Pavlovian', meaning a conditioned response to stimuli, has entered the language. In this monumental and highly scholarly biography, the American historian of medicine Daniel P. Todes points out that Pavlov never trained a dog to salivate to a bell. Rather he was interested in what a study of dogs would reveal about man and, in particular, 'our psychical

experience'. In fact one of his lifelong metaphorical strategies was to view dogs as people, and people as dogs. Contrary to the popular perception of Pavlov as an early behaviourist interested only in outward actions, he primarily wanted to understand inner experience.

As Todes observes, this is the first in-depth, intellectual biography of Pavlov. Hitherto, Russian scholars were inhibited from examining this great Russian icon by the oppressive political climate of their native land and outsiders had only limited access to the archives which were, in any case, written in Russian or dense technical language. Todes has demonstrated formidable powers in mastering these sources, and he has attractively related Pavlov's life to the cultural and political background of Russia. Pavlov lived through a very eventful and turbulent period in the history of Russia. His long life stretched from the reign of Nicholas I to the first decade of Stalin's rule. It took in the emancipation of the serfs, four lost wars, three revolutions, the rapid industrialisation of the country and the mass arrests of the Communist era.

In the 1860s when Pavlov was growing up, science became the symbol of the new, modern Russia. The march of technological progress would consign the old superstitions and religious beliefs to the past. Throughout his life, Pavlov held to the view that science was the best way of understanding humanity. For him, man was no different from the rest of nature, and the findings of the research laboratory could be applied unproblematically to the human psyche.

Pavlov and his wife were acquainted with Dostoyevsky, whose work they both devoured. Dostoyevsky had warned that the scientific faith of the day provided a deeply impoverished vision of man and would lead to tyranny. Pavlov, an atheist, uncomfortably identified with Dostoyevsky's Ivan Karamazov, the young intellectual whose rigorous rationality prevents him from making a leap of religious faith and who is left at the end of *The Brothers Karamazov* in a state of madness. Indeed, as a student Pavlov suffered from

mental instability and was diagnosed with a 'disturbance of the nerves'. A moving aspect of the book is how Pavlov transforms himself from an undisciplined and unsuccessful researcher to become a Nobel Prize winner and the Grand Old Man of world physiology, feted at conferences throughout Europe and America. Pavlov also became a national hero as a result of his fearless stance against the Bolshevik regime. He was responsible for saving many friends and colleagues from the gulag and, despite his atheistic convictions, he stood up for religious freedom. Todes charts the complex game that Pavlov and the Bolsheviks played, each trying to exploit the other. Pavlov wanted research funding and the Bolsheviks wanted to portray Pavlov to the outside world as a shining example of the new Russian science. As a consequence, Pavlov was granted massive institutional support and, almost uniquely for the time, was allowed to criticise the regime.

At the end of his life, Pavlov retained his belief in scientific endeavour but came to a more modest estimation of its ability to explain the human condition. According to Todes, he concluded, 'his own research had failed to confine the psyche within the comforting certainties of mechanistic law'. Certainly his late foray into psychiatric research proved unilluminating. Applying his canine-derived physiological principles to mental illness, he produced a simple binary schema: patients' psychiatric disorders could be explained either in terms of the excitation or inhibition of their nervous systems.

This, then, is likely to be the definitive biography of Pavlov for some time to come, and it also casts much light on the history of science and of modern Russia.

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