

vulnerability. She recognises in particular her traits of sensitivity and perfectionism, and the difficulties inherent in combining motherhood with a high-achieving career.

Kelly gains much solace from words, including poetry and prayer, during her prolonged recoveries. Her familiarity with poetry from childhood may underlie this and her accounts of her life when depressed describe a return to a childlike state, where she is cared for by her devoted husband and mother. Her own role as a mother is temporarily lost, something she reflects on later with a sense of shame and failure.

Although she does not spare herself, it must be acknowledged that her experiences are different from most, given her level of privilege. A full-time nanny cares for her children, her psychiatrist visits her at home every couple of days, and she gives up work without obvious financial pressure, assuming a prolonged sick role. Interestingly, she herself questions the value of this and explores the difficulty of needing to be seen as either fully ill or well, and the possibility, often denied, of secondary gain. But her recovery is allowed to be unusually gentle, with a gradual and vividly recounted reawakening of senses dulled by depression, something not always possible for those less fortunate.

More personally, having also experienced depression, I found this a beautiful book. I remain unconvinced that poetry can cure depression (Kelly does not claim this), but it can provide much needed comfort and sets it within the human experience. In W.H. Auden's words from *Musée des Beaux Arts*, 'About suffering they were never wrong, The Old Masters'.

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## Clinical Guide to Obsessive Compulsive and Related Disorders

By Jon E. Grant, Samuel R. Chamberlain and Brian L. Odlaug, Oxford University Press USA, 2014, £29.99, pb, 272 pp. ISBN: 9780199977758

This book gives an overview of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), hoarding disorder, body dysmorphic disorder, excoriation (skin picking) and trichotillomania, all listed in DSM-5 under 'obsessive-compulsive and related disorders'. The authors have also included hypochondriasis and tic disorder as some of the related disorders.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part gives a general overview and evaluation of the disorders. The second part discusses each disorder in detail, focusing on the clinical description, diagnosis, comorbidity, course and prognosis, differential diagnosis and treatment. Scales that can be used in monitoring treatment are included in the appendix at the end of the book. The final part is titled 'special clinical considerations' and addresses areas such as treatment

resistance, treatment of children and people with intellectual disability, and alternative treatments. This part also mentions neurosurgery for OCD and the ethical dilemmas associated with this approach. The appendices have a list of suggested further reading and contact details of organisations and treatment centres.

A useful resource for trainees and students is a table in the first chapter, which shows types of obsessions and compulsions with good examples. I also like the way the authors describe how to differentiate the symptoms associated with each disorder and normal behaviour. The book also gives practical advice on how to screen for these disorders. The response rates to treatments are discussed and some chapters also mention research work.

There is a table summarising pharmacological treatment for each disorder when managing children and I wished a similar table was done at the end of part two, which could be used as a quick reference guide. The book's title may mislead readers who are looking for information on hypochondriasis and tic disorder.

I would recommend this book for health professionals, students and even patients and their carers. It is well written, concise and easy to follow.

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## Testimony of Experience: Docta Ignorantia and the Philadelphia Association Communities

By Bruce Scott  
PCCS Books, 2014, £22.00, pb, 252 pp.  
ISBN: 9781906254643

R. D. Laing and others founded the Philadelphia Association (PA) in 1965. The PA provides community households where people with emotional difficulties can live with others. The first 'official' community was the infamous Kingsley Hall, a 'counterculture' centre in the East End of London, which after 5 years was largely trashed and uninhabitable. In retrospect, Laing admitted that it was not a 'roaring success' (*Conversations with R. D. Laing*, B. Mullan). Nonetheless, despite the commonly perceived demise of 'anti-psychiatry', with which Laing was associated, the PA has survived nearly 50 years and still runs two community houses. In this book, Bruce Scott, a member of the PA, where he did his psychoanalytic psychotherapy training, offers the testimonies of 14 people who have lived in a PA household. These were obtained mostly by face-to-face interviews or by questionnaire.

Scott sees the PA communities as providing true asylum, in the sense of an 'inviolable place'. There is no discussion, however, about whether such asylum is possible if the person

is detained under the Mental Health Act 1983. My guess is Scott would say not. He makes a case for *docta ignorantia* or the doctrine of learned ignorance, a concept used by Nicolas Cusanus in the 15th century to recognise the limits of knowledge. For Scott, this is a path to health practised by the PA communities. However, there is little discussion about whether such neutrality is attainable. I am uncertain whether Scott's search for an 'anti-method' is anything more than being pragmatic. The testimonies commonly mention the lack of structure in the households. I have no problem with mystery and perplexity and I totally agree with an anti-materialistic stance for dealing with mental distress. The PA rightly wants to avoid the objectification of people with mental health problems. Helping them find their own way is not easy.

This book describes the tension between 'going to pieces' and being helped to 'come back together again'.

Regression and psychosis can be mechanisms of healing and re-adaptation, as noted by Donald Winnicott among others. The PA continues to explore these areas, as does this book, but it may be increasingly difficult to find space for them in a bureaucratic society.

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## Correction

Personal experience: Suicide and psychiatric care – a lament. *BJPsych Bull* 2015; **39**: 45–47. The 2013 Annual Report of the Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Homicide

by People with Mental Illness was incorrectly cited as a source on page 45.

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